THE

DOOMED.

"AND BE ALONE ON EARTH, AS I AM NOW!"

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE DOOMED.

CHAPTER I.

"I have heard the voice of the Judge which is to come."

APOCRYPHA.

In the moment of serious thought, the heathen Aurelius Antoninus uttered the following meditation :—"If thou should'st live three thousand years, or as many myriads, yet remember this, that no man loses any other life than that he now lives; and that he now lives no other life than what he is parting with every instant. The longest life and the shortest come to one'

effect: since the present time is equal to all, what is lost or parted with is equal to all; and for the same reason, what is parted with is only a moment. No man at death parts with, or is deprived of, what is either past or future: for how can one take from a man what he hath not? We should also remember these things, first, that all things which have happened in the combined revolutions from eternity, are of the same kind with what we behold; and 'tis of little consequence whether a man beholds the same things for an hundred years, or for an infinite duration." Mistaken man! are eternity and time the same? Is it the same thing whether the heart contemplates wretchedness and misery for an hundred years, or *for ever*? If it be a grief to part with life, and life be that with which we are every moment parting, is it the same thing whether this grief be experienced during every moment of ten thousand years, or but for the shorter period of threescore years

and ten? Who is he that would willingly prolong the hours of misery and woe?—Alas! alas! had the heathen lived but one moiety of his three thousand years, he would have written in a different strain; yea, and breathed out, even as I do now, the detail of those sorrows which wait upon a long interminable life.

It is not my intention, however, now to dwell upon the causes which entailed upon me the curse of perpetual existence. Suffice it to say, that I am doomed to wander here till this cold world shall be wrapt in one devouring flame. Centuries upon centuries have rolled over my head, and yet, *I am*—thousands of years have passed since first I opened my eyes upon a fair and beautiful land; where, till I came, like the scorching winds of the south bringing desolation in their blast, sin and sorrow had been alike unknown. At this distance of time the remembrance of that fair land,—of the days of my innocence and youth,—comes like a summer

morning's dream to soothe the sorrows of a broken and a withered heart. But, alas! from such a dream how soon am I aroused. It never comes, but with it springs up in vivid freshness the image of the rude altar—the curling smoke rising in a calm and steady column to the land of peace above—the blood of a murdered ——. God of heaven! what a shriek of wild despair still rings upon my ear! Will it never, never pass?—will the image of that red right hand never flit from before my eyes?—Is there but one feeling the darkness of the grave can never sink into oblivion?—Away, away, thou vain and hopeless dream; remorse will live and revel in the ruins of the heart, and sate itself with smiles and mockery amidst its pale decay, while one spark of life remains, or the consciousness of existence dwells upon the sufferer's mind.

But it is not to be supposed that during the lapse of so many years, no gleam of sunshine

ever shone to brighten the dull stream of my life. I have known many bright hours—I have seen the young blossomings of hope spring up like flowers in the desert; till even the dreary waste around seemed to acquire new freshness from their existence. But, alas! these bright hours vanished—these beautiful dreams passed away—and then my heart and soul sank within me, and lay like the cold desert on which no gleam of sunshine ever shone, no flower of beauty ever bloomed.

At the distance of a thousand years, the remembrance of some of these brighter days is still impressed upon my mind. There it lives with all the vivid freshness that adorns the green verdure of the grave, nourished by the sad remains of mortality below; and should this protracted existence be doomed still to continue for a period long as that already past, I never, never can forget the incidents of these, my better and my brighter days.

They are embodied with life itself—and as soon might soul and body separate; and yet the latter live, and move, and think, as the remembrance of these incidents pass away, and life remain behind. And yet, reader, canst thou believe that much of bitterness was mingled with them all? That it should be so will not appear strange, when it is recalled to thy recollection, that he upon whom the curse of an interminable existence has been pronounced, must see the green and beautiful hopes of youth decay—the endearing ties of life break asunder—all that his heart hast ever clung around, perish and depart—the fondest, dearest, brightest of his joys fade; till at length he is left, a lone and solitary being upon the wide waste of a heartless world, alike unknowing and unknown.

I do not mean, however, to detail the history of my life. It would be an unprofitable task; and the limits to which the following pages must of necessity be confined, preclude the

attempt to give even an outline of it. It is simply my intention to beguile a few weary hours by committing to paper some of those most striking events, the memory of which still floats upon the surface of my heart. If the reader should derive instruction or amusement from the narrative, a double purpose will be answered. But let him not hope to find a single thought or sentiment congenial to his own. If he looks for such he will assuredly be disappointed. A wide impassable gulf is placed betwixt us, and I have nothing in common with any being of the human race. I am *alone*—utterly, hopelessly alone. Yet it may be, that to his eyes, the appearance, though not the reality of that separation, may be lessened. I shall therefore clothe my ideas in the garb of the world's language. But the outward seeming must be all; for he who, from the wanderer's pen receives the narrative of events which have been buried in the dark

abyss of time while centuries have rolled unheeded by, must not hope to meet with those passages of deep worldly interest and excitement which characterise the lighter narratives of more modern days.

CHAPTER II.

"The shadows and lights of a chequered and wild existence flit before you."—Introduction to Devereux.

I stood upon the great plain of Babylon, and watched the morning sun arise like a warrior rejoicing in his strength. On he came, gladly, beautifully, brightly, as if mocking and smiling at the wretchedness and the misery of my heart. The golden image of Nebuchadnezzar reared itself like a burning tower in the midst of the plain. The slanting rays of the sun touched gently upon it, and were reflected back in a long stream of bright and yellow light, that, falling on the walls of Babylon, gave the pure and beautiful marble of its fluted

columns the appearance of being tinged with burning gold. Dear, fair city, has this form of clay survived to see thee levelled with the dust? These eyes, that once beheld thee in thy pride and glory, have seen thy place when not one stone remained upon another to tell where thou hadst been. Where youth and beauty trode, the lion and the fox have made their lair—where, from morning till night, the glad noise of revelry and mirth alone resounded, nought but the melancholy hootings of the owl, and the wild cries of beasts of prey are heard.

I gazed upon the bright city with feelings that awoke a degree of interest, even amidst the ruin and the desolation I bore within. I saw its treble walls, round which the Euphrates glided like a silver stream; its gates of burnished brass, so gloriously adorned and carved; its terraces of stone rising like the mountains of Medea, and covered with the trees and foliage of that enchanting clime; its bright

and beautiful paradise, erected by Nebuchadnezzar for his queen; its gorgeously magnificent temple adorned with all the spoils of the Egyptian war; its countless multitude of palaces, with their gilded fanes and domes, all glittering in the morning sun; its long interminable vista of marble columns, with their cornices, shafts, entablatures, and pilasters of the most exquisitely finished workmanship; its pride, its strength, its beauty, that beggar all description, extending far and wide as the eye could reach.

I saw,—I beheld them all; and I asked myself "Are these the works of man?—and can it be that this worn and feeble frame shall yet outlive them all?" It was but a passing thought—for I then contemplated the endless duration of the stupendous and magnificent piles I beheld. It cannot be, I exclaimed, that the hand of time shall leave its impress here. Ruin and decay shall be alike unknown, and this proud

city shall flourish when others are mouldering in the dust. Vain and foolish thought! I know not why it had place within my breast. I had seen other cities, other temples, other palaces, riot through their little day of pride; and in the lapse of centuries, had beheld them levelled in the dust. Why, then, should Babylon outlive them all? Why should *it* alone stand when others fell? Its splendour and its wealth might justly tempt the spoiler to its destruction, but they could not withstand the destroying hand of time. Jerusalem had fallen—why should not Babylon? Nebuchadnezzar had gone forth and conquered the one; why should not the Mede and the Persian roll down upon the other?

But these were the thoughts of after years. I knew not then that the days of its govern ment were numbered. It had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Its destiny was fixed; and ere many revolving suns had

arisen upon that proud city; the Mede and the Persian were indeed at its gates—its kingdom was divided; and the reign of Babylon was no more.

Absorbed with the reflections I have just mentioned, I heeded not the opening of the eastern gate, till a multitude came forth, rushing like the stream of a mighty river, and approached the place of my repose. The cornet, the flute, the dulcimer, and the sackbut sounded. The beauty and the silence of the morning disappeared; and the clamour of a rude and noisy rabble at once usurped their place. On they came, dancing, singing, shouting. "Vain triflers!" I whispered to myself; "on the very verge of mortality do ye thus rejoice—your life is but as a passing sunbeam, or the shadow of a summer cloud, and yet ye dance, and sing, and shout, as if ye were beings of eternity, and not of time."

The sound of the music ceased—the cla-

mours of the multitude were stilled—the crowd opened, and I beheld the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the councillors, the sheriffs, and the rulers of the provinces; the priests, and officers of the royal household—a mighty multitude, gaily adorned, and glittering with all the splendour of the earth. Jewels and precious stones were on their garbs, and the morning sun shone beautifully upon them as they bent before the golden image of the king. Then there was a shout, and the voice of gladness and of mirth, and again all was still.

The herald, in his gaudy apparel, stepped forth, and with a loud voice proclaimed that, when the cornet, and the flute, and the harp, and the sackbut, and the dulcimer should sound, all people of every nation on the earth should fall down and worship the golden image of the king; and that whoso should not fall down and worship it, should that same hour be

cast into the midst of a burning and a fiery furnace. "Wretched idolaters!" I exclaimed, "will ye leave the service of the only true God to fall down and worship stocks and stones?" But my voice was unheeded by the multitude: the sounds of revelry increased; they danced, they shouted, and they sung: they were as if possessed by the spirit of some infuriated demon—their own madness added fuel to the flame—each encouraged his neighbour in wickedness and guilt—their actions became obscene, and I turned myself away in very loathing from the sight.

I was sad and sick at heart—even I who had scorned my God, and trampled under foot his laws. But did *I* presume to judge my neighbour? Was I one whit more clean or pure in heart than they? A sad, but not a hardened conscience presented these questions to my mind, and a deadly faintness stole over me as my enormous guilt reared itself again to view.

But the cool sweet air of the morning played upon my brow: I felt revived, and proceeded on my way. Few, however, were the steps I had taken, when the loud sounds of the cornet, and the flute, and the harp, and the sackbut, and the dulcimer, again fell upon my ear. An irresistible feeling of curiosity compelled me to turn round; and I beheld the amazing multitude—princes, kings, governors, rulers, as if struck by some invisible power, fall prostrate on the earth. I, too, bent me to the ground; but I worshipped not the golden image of the king. I prayed unto my own God; and, in my heart, that prayer sounded as one for pardon of *their* sin.

I arose, and again turned me to the East. I cared not where I went. I wished but to flee from the idolators I had left behind; for amongst them I saw there could be no solace for a wounded spirit—no balm for a broken heart. "It is not," I exclaimed, "in crowded

cities or amidst the wealthy and the gay that happiness and peace are to be found ;" and I bent my steps towards the Desert that lay betwixt me and Palmyra. I fondly fancied that my heart would there find its own counterpart—its image—its type—and revel amidst the desolation by which it was surrounded. It was a new, and, for the time, a buoyant thought, and I proceeded lightly on my way.

There is something beautiful in the soft and soothing feeling that remains behind when the moment of keen excitement has passed away, and the heart reposes like a weary traveller, in the noon-day heat, when he reclines his limbs underneath the shadow of the spreading palm, and the clear fountain, with its grateful coolness, murmurs at his feet. But, alas! how often, too, does the thought, the fancy of a moment, elevate or depress the human heart, unless that heart be guided by a better, a higher, a steadier principle than this cold and

selfish world can bestow. In the one case, it is a ship without ballast upon a troubled and a stormy sea, tossed about by every wave and every wind that may chance to blow: in the other, it is the same ship with its freight of ballast, guided by a sure hand, moving grandly, steadily, beautifully along to its destined haven, whatever winds blow or tempests rave around its form.

The Desert lay before me, and the mighty city of Babylon reared its myriads of palaces and temples in majestic grandeur behind. My steps were bent towards the former; but we are the creatures of destiny or impulse, and it was ordained that my feet should not tread within the boundary of its wide and desolate extent. Yes, *it was so written.* Thousands of years have rolled over my head, and I have seen empires and nations rise and fall. I have witnessed the mutability and uncertainty of all human affairs, and yet my mind is still

strongly tinged with the fatalism of the East. I cannot forget it; I believe that there is a fixed and settled destiny in all things; and, as the inhabitant of those sunny regions will sit down and fold his hands with the most listless apathy and unconcern to all things animate or inanimate around him, still answering to every remonstrance that may be made to rouse him to exertion, "It is written;"—so would I answer to all those helpless beings who would urge me, by a vain endeavour or the use of human means, to change the fixed and settled current of affairs, "It is so written, and my strength is vain."

A crowd came rushing past me, and in the midst I beheld three men bound with strong and new cords, and dragged along, as it were, in frantic and delirious triumph. I asked their crime, but he to whom I addressed myself returned me no answer; my voice fell unheeded on his ear, and, with the others, he

shouted aloud, "Away with them—away with them, to the king—to the king." I looked upon the three prisoners, and I knew them to be strangers. Great was the beauty of their persons and the comeliness of their countenances, and a gentle and forgiving spirit, and a calmness of resignation shone in their blue eyes, that impressed me with a strong desire to learn somewhat of their fate. I, too, followed the multitude by whom they were surrounded, and ere many minutes had elapsed I stood within the walls of Babylon and in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar the king.

He sat in the pride and pomp of place, adorned with all the external marks of royalty, and his guards and his captains, glittering with cloth of gold and with cloth of silver, and their bright armour gleaming in the sun, in thousands stood around. But oh, how their splendour sunk, how their gaudy trappings vanished from the mind's eye, how the

best and the greatest among them disappeared in utter insignificance, when compared with the glory of the god-like king. His form was cast in beauty's manliest mould, and he sat on his throne of ivory and gold as if placed there to be the model of all that was excellent and beautiful upon earth. Alas! was that form in the pride and the vigour of its youth, in the glory and the excellence of its strength, at whose slightest look even kings and nations trembled, and whose nod the world itself obeyed,—was it so soon to herd with the beasts of the field, and, devoid of reason and of sense, to devour the herbage as an ox? Great God! how inscrutable are all thy ways! Thou dost indeed rule in the kingdom of the children of men, and giveth it to whomsoever thou wilt.

In this presence, the three whom I had seen stood,—fearless and unabashed. The accuser stepped forward, and I heard their names pro-

nounced—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.—And he told in the presence of the king that they served not his gods; nor, when the cornet, and the flute, and the harp, and the sackbut, and the dulcimer sounded, fell down and worshipped the image which the king had set up. And the countenance of the king was clouded, and his anger waxed very high—and, amidst all his brightness and his grandeur, sore displeasure stole across his face like a dark cloud upon the summer sun. And he turned to Hananiah, and to Mishael, and to Azariah, and he asked them, "Is it true that ye do not serve my gods, nor worship the golden image that I have set up?"—And they looked upon the king, most fearlessly, and answered, "Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we do serve our own God, and if it be his will, he is able to deliver us even out of thy hand." But the king turned unto them with a look of fierce contempt, and exclaimed, "Who is that God that shall de-

liver you out of *my* hands?"—And they answered him and said, "He is the God of Israel, and of Jacob, and, if it be his will, he will deliver us out of thy hand; but if not, know oh! king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Thus spake they, and I wondered at their boldness, for they were young—very young—and the down of manhood had scarcely darkened upon their lips. But the king was full of anger and of fury, and he rent his robe, and he threw down his crown, and the red blood rose to his cheek and to his brow, and he exclaimed, "Am I thus set at nought and despised by them?" And he commanded that the furnace should be heated one seven times more than it was wont to be heated, and that Hananiah, and Mishael, and Azariah, should be cast therein and utterly consumed. Then I turned and looked upon the comely faces of the young men who stood there, thus doomed,

by a cruel decree, to be cut off in the prime and vigour of their youth and in the midst of their beauty and their strength. But they were not blanched by fear;—not a limb, not a muscle trembled. Their eyes shone with a gladness that spoke more of heaven than of earth, and while they seemed to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer in the cause, their lips broke forth into a song of thanksgiving and of praise. Blessed, blessed hope, that cheers the faithful in their hour of need, and lightens the dark and narrow passage of the grave with a splendour that the eye of man has not beheld, nor the heart of man conceived!

The ready hands of the executioners soon wrapt their outer garments around them, and covered their comely faces with a linen cloth; and they were bound and carried away to be cast into the fiery furnace. But they went not alone—for the king and the multitude fol-

lowed, and I too felt myself compelled to go. The music still sounded, the people still clamoured and rejoiced, and, as they passed the golden image of the king, they again, with wild delirious joy, prostrated themselves before it.

As for me, I beheld the silent image with feelings far different from those with which I had viewed its grandeur in the calm beauty of the morning. *Then*, I had gazed upon it, surrounded with all the borrowed splendour of the bright and early light of day, and deemed it a fair specimen of exquisite workmanship bestowed on the most costly of materials. *Now*, I could not in my own mind separate its cold, inanimate, forbidding look from the work of death that was going on. I could not absolve that senseless image from its share in the destruction of the good, and the holy, and the just. "Hadst thou not been there," I exclaimed, "this would not have been!"

But the strong men of the king's army, and

the mighty of his household, approached; and the gates of the furnace were opened, and they took up Hananiah, and Mishael, and Azariah, to cast them into the midst of it, that they might be utterly consumed. But these three blanched not, trembled not, feared not. Like the tall cedars of Lebanon, that bend not before the blast, they stood unshaken and unmoved amidst the wild breathings of destruction that gathered around. They sang aloud, hymns of triumph and of praise, to the God of their fathers;—and, with joy and gladness on their lips the children of Zedekiah were cast into the furnace to be consumed. I saw the wild rush of the devouring element as they fell amidst the flame. The sickness of death stole upon my heart, and I turned away from the sight: but a groan, a deep groan succeeded—a groan of mortal agony and distress. It sounded nigh, very nigh at hand, and I looked around and beheld the strong men of the

king's army and the mighty of his household, who had taken up the children of Zedekiah, lying at the mouth of the furnace, dead—dead. Their hard features were distorted with the pain of sudden death—their brawny limbs scorched and blackened by the flame—and their gay clothing and adornments lay, a heap of useless ashes, to be scattered by the first wind that might chance to blow across the Desert.

The vengeance of the Lord had come speedily; but on this awful day it was destined that His wonderful works should be manifested in a still more striking manner. Songs of gladness and of joy were heard suddenly to issue from the midst of the burning fiery furnace! Had the most devouring of all elements ceased to exercise its power? Had the depths of that burning furnace become as a cool chamber of beauty and of light?—and did the children of Zedekiah repose amidst these

flames, as if they lay upon a bed of roses, or were surrounded by the fragrant flowers that grow in the beautiful regions of the East? I know not—I cannot tell. Mortal judgement cannot search into the inscrutable and mysterious ways of an all-wise Providence. There is a feeling which sometimes weighs upon the heart presaging future evil, or the approach of somewhat of more intense interest than the ordinary events of life give rise to. It comes like the settled calm before a midnight storm. Can it be that any connecting and mysterious link of communication exists with the inner man that is hid from the perception of our outward senses? Do coming events, indeed, "cast their shadows before?" Reader, thousands of years have rolled over my head, the combined wisdom of worlds and of ages has been mine, yet to these questions my only answer still must be, "*I know not—I cannot tell.*" But that inscrutable feeling, that unde-

fined and indefinable impression now hung upon my soul, and weighed upon my heart, and soon—Oh! how soon indeed,—were its forebodings most amply and fully realized.

When these glad songs of joy sounded in his ear, Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and he arose up in great haste, and he looked within the furnace and called his counsellors around him, and he said, "Did not we cast *but* three men bound into the midst of the fire?" And the counsellors—the men of wisdom, they who governed provinces, and empires, and kingdoms—they too were astonished, and much fear fell upon them, and they bent before the king, and answered him and said, "True, Oh! king, we did." Then the king cast his sandals from his feet, and he rent his garment, and he clasped his hands, and looked towards the pure and cloudless skies that hung above him, and exclaimed, "Behold, for I see *four* men loose, walking in the midst of

the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is in the form of the Son of God!"

I stood by him and I heard these words, and my soul sunk within me. A darkness spread itself across my eyes as if my steps had been wandering in the valley of the shadow of death. I would have fled from the sight of my offended God, but my feet were rooted to the spot, and I could not move. How long I remained in this situation I know not. By a strong and violent effort I roused my slumbering senses, and with the wild and eager glance of despair, searched into the depths of that burning fiery furnace. There—there I beheld the likeness of that form which I had seen but once before—It was on that ——— No, no, no—I cannot recall the awful hour —it must pass away from the records of time. Would that it could sink into oblivion in the depths of this worn and withered heart. But this may never be.

Deep fear seized upon me, and with the wild and reckless speed of a maniac, I girded my loins, and fled howling from the sight, calling aloud upon the mountains to hide me, the hills to cover me. On, on I pressed, while in imagination the execrations of a multitude rung upon my ear. But there was no human being near me. A roused and startled conscience alone had suggested these fearful sounds;—yet still they rung, and rung, and rung in my ear as if they were reality, and not the offspring of a disturbed and troubled brain; and I—I fled onward, onward, with a headlong and increasing speed, till the failure of my thick and panting breath, and the increased heaving of my weary breast at last compelled me to stop in the midst of my wild career. I paused—I listened. These wild outcries and execrations seemed still to be borne upon the breeze, and again I fearfully, madly, fled forward. The light and

dry sand of the arid plain was spurned like lightning from my feet,—the graceful antelope bounded in terror from my path,—the bright-eyed gazelle gazed from afar on my mad career,—the mountain-eagle for a moment flapped his wings above my head, and then fled from a course well nigh as swift and fearless as his own. On, on I hurried;—trees, rocks, hills, and mountains, passed unheeded by—till, worn, weary, and exhausted, I sank down, and in a blessed forgetfulness lost all sense of the wretchedness and misery of my situation.

CHAPTER III.

"No loved one now in feigned lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave;
Ere the cold Stranger passed to other climes."

BYRON.

MANY centuries had elapsed since the occurrence of the events recorded in the preceding Chapter, when I found myself, on one of those calm and beautiful mornings which are peculiar to an Eastern clime, slowly wandering along the banks of the sacred Ganges. I gazed upon its tranquil, motionless beauty, till, like the followers of Vishnŭ, I could have deemed it nigh divine. A cool fragrant air arose from its transparent wave, the refreshing sweetness

of which can only be esteemed by those who have sojourned in the burning clime of India. A delicious fragrance issued from a thousand aromatic shrubs, and in the coolness and beauty of the morning I could almost have fancied myself transplanted to that place, of a brighter and a better hope, where the "wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." But the increasing heat of the rising sun soon served to remind me that I was still a wanderer in this sad world, and that I had not yet departed to where scorching heats and chilling colds are alike unknown and unfelt.

At no great distance from the spot where I stood, a deep grove of mingled tamarind and mango trees afforded a cool and grateful shelter from the overpowering rays of the sun. I bathed my limbs in the sacred river, although without experiencing, or believing in any of those benefits which the Hindoos attribute to its sanctity, and then hurried to repose beneath

the refreshing shade of those beautiful trees. The scene was, in many respects, one of novelty to me, and I well remember how inviting their broad and fan-like leaves appeared as I stretched my limbs beside the cooling fountain that played below, and sunk into a calm, still slumber, dreaming of the joys of heaven, and of arched palaces of fillagree-work suspended far above my head. Alas! it is but in dreams that the weary enjoy the beauties of existence.

The sun had long passed his meridian splendour when I again awoke to pursue my dreary way, I knew not, cared not, where. All earth was alike to me. Remorse—that deathless and undying viper, preyed upon my heart, and the mark of Cain was branded on my brow. From place to place I wandered with that horrid vacancy of feeling which nothing can supply. What was earth to me? What was all it could afford? What were its beauties, its

glory, its riches, its magnificence? Less than nothing! I had gazed upon them all, and I knew that they would pass away before I did. The worm that never dies gnawed at my heart, and the fire that is never quenched circled round my vitals. I had no communion of feeling with any being upon the earth, and I wandered forward in very sadness of heart, caring for none, and knowing that none lived who loved or cared for me.

But how often in the history of a life does it happen, that, when the heart is surrounded with the deepest clouds of darkness and dismay, a sudden gleam of sunshine breaks through to enliven its sadness and rouse it from despair. I have experienced this truth more than once; and, even now, when mine was weighed down and depressed by utter despondency, and its long vista of the future was darkened with the prospect of a sad and cheerless gloom—one of those bright gleams,

the brightest and most beautiful it has ever known, was about to burst through the cold mass of surrounding sorrow, and scatter its dark and dreary shadow, like the thin and vapoury clouds that pass away from the gladness of the rising sun.

Yet why should *I* dwell upon the brightness of these evanescent gleams? Why should I wish that such should ever come? They pass, and leave the weary soul more dark and desolate than before; more dark—from the strong contrast of the vanished light; more desolate—from the wild and enthusiastic association that accompanied it. From me that gleam passed—as, sooner or later, such gleams must pass from every son of the human race—passed, and left me a prey to that loneliness of heart, the weary of this world know. It was the dying look of a bright but setting sun, that sheds one long and quivering ray of beauty, ere the dark clouds of evening come to shade

the gladness of its light. But stay—I must not so far anticipate my tale.

I wandered onward, till I came to a place of tombs, whose many minarets and domes at a short distance appeared like the temples of a crowded city. When I approached I found them to be the habitations of the dead. In one sense it was indeed a crowded city—but it was crowded with those who were at rest. I saw the long avenue of citron, lime, and orange trees, and methought their gay and beautiful appearance but ill accorded with the gloom that hung around the mansions of the silent. Yet, in truth, except in the associations connected with them—and it may be from the jaundiced feeling wherewith I viewed the world and its things—there was but little of sadness or of gloom about these many dwellings. Those who had admired the lofty dome, and the gilded minaret, lay here at rest beneath the shadow of a field of domes and a

thousand gilded minarets. "And such," said I, "is the end of human life—such the close of its vanity and show."

I passed by this place of tombs, and I saw before me a lofty building whose innumerable domes and minarets, of the whitest marble, seemed to adorn the palace of a king. And, if that word can convey to the mind the idea of all the combined beauty and magnificence the efforts of a world could bestow, it was indeed a palace. But it was not the dwelling of a living king. It was but a monarch's tomb. I approached it with a feeling of curiosity that had long been dormant within my breast, for it suited the melancholy of my mind to view the nothingness of man. I ascended to its lofty gate by a hundred steps; and a building of the most beautiful red granite, porphyry, and marble, stood before my eyes. A succession of long and magnificently arched apartments, whose roofs and walls were

covered with ornaments of solid gold and silver, appeared in an almost interminable vista through the open gate. Around were rich and beautifully wrought borderings of flowers, and those flowers were formed of most precious and many-coloured stones. Inscriptions from the Koran, in free and grand relief, were numerous upon the walls. The riches of the East were scattered with a profusion that dazzled the eyes and confused the senses. One small white sarcophagus I well remember. It was strewed, thickly strewed, with pale and beautiful flowers. They shone in natural beauty, and were neither withered nor decayed. I put forward my hand to gather one of them from its stem—but it was cold, and hard to the touch, and I then saw that these beautiful and perfumed flowers were formed of the precious jewels of the earth. I looked around the apartment, and the walls of white marble were adorned in the same manner; every flower was

fashioned from appropriately coloured stones, and the blue silver of the roof was studded with golden stars that shone and glittered like the mimic suns of a pure and cloudless night. "And is this," I exclaimed aloud, "is this, more fitted to be a palace than a tomb, the habitation of the dead?"—"No more!" replied a hollow voice near me; and the officiating Brahmin silently pointed to the centre of the ornamental flowers, and there, upon a narrow spot, barely sufficient to mark where a peasant lay, I beheld four small, but beautifully formed Arabic characters, which simply told the name of him whose dust slumbered beneath;—and this was all the record of that proud and gorgeous building.

I turned away with a heavy sigh, and my heart was humbled within me, when I reflected on the narrow spot that each busy, living, and bustling being of this world must at last inhabit. The mighty monarch who slept be-

neath that splendid tomb had built it for himself, and a few feet of it was all that he *could* now possess. Its splendour, its magnificence, were as nothing to him—his eyes were closed, and he could no more behold them—his ears were shut, and he could no more hear the voice of the wondering traveller, or the sound of the praises he bestowed. "Vain and foolish man!" I exclaimed, "for what do ye toil?" and the words of holy writ sounded in my heart, "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread; and your labour for that which satisfieth not."

My mind was filled with melancholy reflections as I trode forward on my way; the nothingness to which death will reduce the best and the greatest of mankind, and the vain splendour wherewith he seeks to secure to himself the record of a name—of a name that will soon perish from the annals of the human race—a splendour that in a few short

years thereafter will pass, and no trace of it remain.

While my mind was thus occupied, I crossed one of those many tributary streams which flow into the Ganges. I ascended a gently sloping declivity, and a good type of their verity extended itself far and wide before me. For miles and miles around I saw nothing but the devastations of a sad and lamentable ruin. Here, a long row of broken columns,—there, a few shattered pillars, were all that remained to tell where palaces had stood. I pressed forward, but long ere I reached the visible commencement of these ruins the red and crumbling soil adhering to my feet told me that I trod upon the scite of the far-famed and splendid Goŭr. Even now it was a ruin, and the name of its founder had already passed from the memory of man. Be it so,—it is not my part to awaken it from the forgetfulness in which it slumbers.

That proud city had been a contemporary of Tyre and Sidon. Empires had risen and fallen since its day. The beauty and the grandeur of Palmyra and Babylon had been as nought when compared with its magnificence and splendour; its dwellings had been palaces of pride—its treasures had been full —its daughters fair—its sons mighty men of valour—its princes conquerors of the world; music and dancing had been in its streets— the sound of joy and gladness in its halls— and turbaned crowds, glittering in jewels, and in gold, and in silver, had thronged upon its walls. But now! where were they all? Its mosques, and its temples, and its palaces, were crumbling in the dust. Huge blocks of marble, giant masses of stone, falling to decay, and long ranges of broken and shattered columns, were all that remained of these. Its daughters and its sons had vanished from amidst the countless multitudes of the human

race; their place was no more, and their memory was gone. The knot grass, and briar, fettered the hands of its princes, the conquerors of a world, and *they* too had returned to their native clay. Music and dancing were no more within its streets, nor the sound of joy and gladness in its halls. The wild cry of the jackall, the howling of the hungry wolf, and the melancholy note of the owl, had usurped the place of these;—where the turbaned crowds, glittering with jewels, and with gold, and with silver, had walked, ruin and desolation alone were seen; and scarce one stone remained upon another to tell where the palaces of Goür had been.

Such was Goür at the period of which I speak. But, reader, *that* was two thousand years ago. *Now,* you will look in vain even for that wondrous mass of ruin and decay. Go to the spot, and you will tread through long and tangled grass, copsewood, and din-

gle; pools of stagnant water, waste and uncultivated fields, for the length of a day's journey, ere you pass the place where this renowned city once stood; even that period of time will scarce suffice to carry you through the wilderness it has left. Perchance, when you stumble over a single stone, half hidden by the rank weeds and grass by which it is surrounded, and look upon the sad remains of the fairest sculpture, the idea of temples and palaces may dwell for a moment on your mind; but that is all, for fancy must yield to the reality which presents itself in sight.

The setting sun was now fast sinking in the west, and the pure and cloudless sky was tinged with the beautiful crimson of departing day. Long and vivid streaks of light shot, as it were, to the centre of the heavens; and where earth and heaven met there appeared one blaze of bright and burnished gold. I sat upon the base of a ruined pillar to admire

the beauty of that setting sun, and gazed upon the transparency of hue his last rays shed upon the white marble columns that extended far and near around me. A single palm tree reared its stately form above my head, and on its branches one solitary owl hooted gladly at the approach of night. The mournful and appalling cry of a large pack of jackalls sounded in the distance. I fancied they might approach, snuffing, howling for my blood; and if they *could* have relieved me from the load of a weary existence, joyfully would I have raised myself to meet them: but I knew that no created power, nor the elements themselves, could injure one hair of my head, or deprive me of the principle of life I bore within. Mine were the sorrows of the heart, the sufferings of the mind; and gladly, Oh, how gladly, would I have exchanged them for the most severe of bodily pains—yea, even the agony of dissolution itself. But,

alas! this could not be:—no, no; for ages, for centuries, for thousands and thousands of years, I might still wander upon the earth, a wretched and solitary being. Sad, sad thought! There was madness in it: and, in deep agony of mind, I rolled my mantle around me, and buried my face within my hands, and bent me to the dust, as if by shutting out the pale glimmering of the stars, and the silvery brightness of the moon, I could exclude the dark and flitting shadows that stole across my mind.

CHAPTER IV.

"To sleep—perchance to dream."
SHAKSPEARE.

It is in sleep alone that the wretched find repose: they sink into a momentary forgetfulness of all the sorrows that press upon a broken heart, and bruise a wounded spirit. It may be that some beautiful dream, like the breathings of the thoughts of twilight, will steal upon their soul; and then, even in the midst of their wretchedness and misery, a calm smile will dwell upon the sleeper's features, and he will fancy himself in heaven while surrounded by the mockery and mad-

ness of a weary world. But, alas! when once more he awakens to the truth, how forlorn is his condition! He has but the memory of a dream, a faint and fleeting shadow, to contrast with the reality around. He is oppressed; he is worn down by a sense of his own condition, and he seeks, in renewed slumbers, again to lose the remembrance of his grief. Yet, who would sleep for ever? Who would wish even for a moment to imagine that the hour of death was to be the hour of annihilation, and that soul and body would be alike consigned to the dust, to sleep the sleep of oblivion, through a long and endless eternity of years? Not one! There lives not, breathes not, the man who could wish for this.

Insensibly I dropt asleep in the posture I have described. The cool fragrance of the evening breeze played around my brow, and the spreading branches of the palm sheltered me from the light dew that was falling on the

earth. How long I remained in this situation I know not, but fancy was at work, and the kind spirit of the mind was busy in its dwelling.

I dreamt, and behold, a pair of beautiful wings sprang from my shoulders, and a light ethereal feeling spread itself within my heart. It was more akin to the thoughts of the world of eternity than to those of the world of time. I felt as if I could no longer remain on this material earth, and with inconceivable velocity I darted forward into the wide space of immensity by which it was surrounded. A young and joyous feeling, that can neither be fancied nor described, pervaded my whole soul, and I wheeled around in many a glad and airy circle; now skimming over the beautiful trees and rich grassy fields that lay below me, and anon darting upward to the blue sky that hung like a glittering canopy above. For long I enjoyed myself in this delightful sport

till the irresistible feeling stole upon me, that I was the object of pursuit to some dark and invisible demon, and, although the scene around me was bright and beautiful as ever, the bare idea chilled me to the heart. It was no flight of fancy,—my forebodings were too soon realized; I heard the cold flutter of the demon's wings, I felt the icy chillness of his grasp, and, with the rapidity of lightning, I was dragged again to earth. Instantly, on touching it, I found myself imprisoned and secured, not by the invisible demon of the air, but, in one of those sudden and unaccountable changes of a dream, by two beings, of what description I know not, but they appeared to be of this world, and yet they were young, fair, innocent, and beautiful, as aught that reality had ever seen, or fancy in its youthful moments dreamt of. They pressed my wings close to my shoulders, so that I could no longer stretch them to fly away. I

turned a piteous and supplicating look upon them; but, although neither spoke, a laughing spirit of mischief shone from their eyes, and told me, as plain as words could have done, that they would not part with me for all the world could bestow. For years, long years, I remained in their hands, although I often, often attempted to escape. They were vigilant, unweariedly vigilant,, and never for a moment left me. Repeatedly had my wings been spread abroad, and repeatedly had I been upon the very point of soaring from the earth, when these mischievous beings clasped them down upon my shoulders, and again held me in their thraldom. Yet, strange as it may appear, I *loved* them, dearly loved them; although, with all my anxiety to remain with them, and to be where they were, I felt that this world was not my resting place, and I watched every opportunity to flee away and be at rest. At length, one day, one bright

and cloudless day, we lay together basking in the sunshine of a fair and foreign land: the blue sky shone above; and beautiful trees, and green fields, and silvery lakes were around, —and no human being, and no human habitation near. All was peace, beauty, and harmony: and was not this enough to satisfy the heart of man? It should have been, but mine it did not satisfy, and watching my opportunity I darted away—far, far into the upper air. But I could not shut my ears to the wild heart-broken cry of my two beautiful companions. I could not turn away my eyes, nor avoid seeing the pale miserable forms that lay stretched like beautiful flowers upon the grass; nor close my heart to those beseeching looks, that, more eloquent than words, besought my return to happiness and them. I hesitated—I approached nearer to the earth—when suddenly one of my companions darted forward in pursuit of me. By what means

she soared into the air I cannot tell; but, judge of my condition when I found, although my wings were spread, that I could not fly away. My heart beat with terror, and a thrilling sensation of agony ran through every vein. The light fingers of my pursuer just touched me, and I was again upon the point of being secured, and brought captive to the earth, when the cold and leaden weight that hung upon me vanished, and I darted forward, free as the surrounding air, soaring away with clasped hands and a glad and joyful heart, to a pure world of light and life above. Oh! how I enjoyed the freedom I had so long panted after. In the delirious feeling of the moment, the earth, and all its passing joys, seemed, like the fruits of the Dead Sea, but ashes to the taste. On, on I sprung, till the thought of my innocent, my beautiful companions, came across my mind. Could I leave them behind? Oh, no!—the

first, the dearest wish of my heart was, that they, too, should go to heaven with me,—and downward again I darted to the earth. It was but a moment's work, and I stood beside them,—bright, beautiful, innocent as ever. Again they laughed—again they smiled—and looks of the purest joy irradiated their lovely faces, and lighted up their speaking eyes. One of them laid her hand gently, most gently, on my shoulder; yet I deemed it was her wish to detain me on the earth, and I struggled to be free. In the struggle I awoke. My dream was gone, but that gentle hand still lay upon my shoulder. I looked up, and I beheld a countenance, the most beautiful I had ever seen, gazing on me with an intensity of interest I cannot now describe. I fancied that I yet dreamt, and I closed my eyes, and turned again to my repose. But that gentle hand still lay upon me, and a voice, like the sweet whisperings of the summer wind, asked

me if I felt unwell. I started to my feet; sickness and despondency vanished; and I remained for many minutes in the firm belief that she who stood before me was the inhabitant of a purer and a better world than that on which I trode.

The being on whom I gazed, it is true, had no outward resemblance to the imaginary creatures of my dream;—but she stood there—a living, breathing, moving form, in a beauty far excelling theirs. I never beheld any being so exquisitely innocent and lovely. Her dress and manner betokened her a Hindoo of the highest caste. She might have seen sixteen summers, certainly not more, and the glowing beauty of her form and features had just ripened into the opening gladness of the bashful maiden. Her complexion was of a clear, transparent brown, light as that which I have ofttimes seen in the southern regions of Europe,—and it was enlivened by a tint, beau-

tiful and pure as the opening rosebud of the early Spring. Her dark and sparkling eyes now searched into the soul, and anon, when she deemed herself observed, dropped in humid softness to the ground. Her long black hair, soft, luxuriant, and beautiful as a mass of silken thread, was loosely, but gracefully, entwined around a head, the proportions of which would have added grace to the Medicean Venus. The lovely contour of her countenance—the graceful turn of her neck—the gentle fall of her shoulders—and the exquisitely formed shape of her limbs—no description can do justice to. And if these I cannot describe, how shall I attempt to convey even the most distant idea of the confiding innocence and simplicity that hung around them all. Oh! Zehlima, Zehlima! I dare not recall these to recollection. Thou wert too pure—too beautiful—for such a world as this. Even now, thy youthful form, with its flowing garb

of various coloured silk loosely wound around it, and the pure white linen falling in graceful folds from thy lovely neck and bosom, stands before my eyes in all its innocence and beauty, as it then stood beneath the shelter of that solitary palm, amidst the far-spreading desolation of the ruined Goür.

I gazed upon her, while she stood there—life amidst decay—living beauty amidst the surrounding ashes of the dead, as I would have gazed upon some angel dropt from a higher sphere, till the deepness of her blushes, and the trembling of her frame, recalled me to the recollection of what was due to one so beautiful and young.

Reader, be not surprised at her emotion. Long as I had wandered upon the surface of this earth, I was still in the prime and the vigour of my youth, and to a careless and unobservant spectator I would not have appeared to be many years the senior of

Zehlima. Every ardent feeling, too, of my life was still green: in the moment of excitement, sin and sorrow were forgotten; the buoyant hopes of youth pressed upon my heart like a full tide of happiness and joy, and, it may be said, that even *I* then experienced those sensations of delight which pass not from the heart of man till added years have dimmed his understanding and chilled the warm current of his blood. But, alas! like angel visits, these sensations came, few and far between, and the blue glimpses of a wintry sky, amidst the dark clouds of a surrounding storm, were not so soon—so quickly—so rapidly—and *for ever* hid from view. Even while they lasted, the purity of their enjoyment was, ever and anon, damped by one corroding thought, that came, slowly stealing o'er them all. On it came, cloathed in smiles and mockery, as if I were a being totally unworthy of the unalloyed happiness even of a single hour. But

enough—enough of retrospection—present misery is a sufficient load, and retrospection will not relieve its weight.

Again, with a soft and trembling voice, the innocent Zehlima inquired if I felt unwell she had seen me in the garb of a stranger, reposing in the midst of that wide-spread field of desolation; she had watched my troubled sleep, and shaded my forehead from the heat of the now arisen sun, but the alternate smiles and writhings of my countenance had disturbed her, and she awoke me from my dream. I took her hand, her small taper hand, within my own, and gently pressing it, while my heart was full of gratitude, I assured her that I was not ill, but fatigued, and weary, and a stranger. She did not withdraw her hand—every feeling in her breast was innocent and pure; and there was no ill-timed affectation of modesty in her look or voice, when, mildly and calmly, she besought me to

go to the dwelling of her father, the Brahmin Amroŭ, where *peace* and shelter should be mine.

Peace—there was music in the word, and music in the voice which uttered it. Silently I motioned to accompany her; and the beautiful Zehlima, raising from the ground a small brazen urn filled with the sacred water of the Ganges, lightly and gracefully tripped away before me. Happy—happy being!—innocent and gay, how little didst thou know of the sorrow or sadness of the world; not even in name had they ever reached thine ear.

Light as her burden was, I would have borne it for her, but with one hand she held it far without my reach, and with the other, gently repressing my endeavour, gave me to understand that one of her own caste alone could bear these sacred vessels. Then I remembered that, among the Hindoos, those of the lower and the higher castes did not

mingle, and that even the touch of one of an inferior caste would contaminate and render useless any vessel belonging to one of a superior order. I smiled, for, at the same time, recollection presented to my view the hundreds of different superstitions in religion I had known and seen, in every different quarter of the globe, and the utter vainness of any attempt to persuade their votaries of their folly. I remembered, too, the law of the Hindoos, which says that "The appetite of a woman can no more be satiated, than a devouring fire by the combustibles that are thrown into it; or the ocean by the rivers which discharge themselves into its bosom; or the empire of death by the men and animals it swallows up;" and I looked upon the beautiful and innocent being before me, and I wondered that such a law could exist among them. I smiled;—but Zehlima looked grave, till I assured her that, in my own land,

I was of as high a caste as she; and then she, too, *I think*, smiled;—at least, a glad look lighted up her eyes, and lightly we proceeded on our way.

We moved along the banks of the Pearl Lake, hand in hand, as if for years we had known and loved each other. We crossed the long peninsula on which the beautiful ruin of the Palace of Pleasure stood. Within its precincts many a light and airy foot had trode; but now, close by the margin of the lake, four splendid arches, supported on five pillars of the most highly polished black marble, were all that remained of the Palace of a King. In the day of its pride, it had been erected from the ruined remains of one of the most magnificent edifices of Goŭr; but now stood, itself, the melancholy monument of a second decay —the ruin of a ruin.

The morning was still, and calm, and beautiful, and the melancholy notes of the ring-

dove, mingled with the soft tones of the mango bird, sounded sweetly on the ear. The brilliantly illumined plumages of a variety of many-coloured paroquets, sporting in a neighbouring grove of tamarind trees, glanced gaily upon the eye, as they flew backwards and forwards, enjoying the gladness of the morning sun, and the freshness of the morning air. All nature seemed in a happy mood; and the good Amroü, seated near the entrance of his wildly-romantic dwelling, seemed, with a grateful heart, to appreciate the blessings he enjoyed.

He was a hale, stout old man, and his long and flowing hair, as white as silver, would have led the beholder to believe that he had seen many years, had it not been for the brightness of his dark eye, and the florid beauty of his cheek, which told that those silvery hairs had come there before their time. He arose, and his tall form looked nobly

grand, as he welcomed the stranger to his abode. I gazed upon him with an admiration which could not escape his penetrating eyes; and with an open smile, such as he would have bestowed upon a wayward youth, he again welcomed me—me who had seen the revolution of a hundred times the period of his own years. He asked no questions; I came with his beloved Zehlima– the likeness of her sainted mother—and that was enough for him.

Kindly the old man welcomed me—kindly he led me into his abode, and from that hour I became the inmate of his humble dwelling. Yet, humble as it was, let not the reader suppose it wanted either the conveniences or the luxuries of life. It possessed both; for the Brahmin Amroü was a wealthy man—wealthy as those of the same caste, who lived with an almost regal splendour. But it was the pleasure of the old man's heart to do good to

many: it was the delight of the old man's life to dwell in this lone and sequestered spot with his only child, the beautiful Zehlima. Whole forests of the ever-blooming acacia, ripe golden clusters of the champac flower, groves of the splendid cadam tree, and huge masses of the twisted mango, surrounded his dwelling far and near. It was indeed a lovely spot; and ripe and delicious were the fruits that hung above; sweet was the perfume of the soft and verdant grass beneath, and soothing to the worn heart and weary soul was the melody of the thousand birds of the neighbouring groves, as, in the calm beauty of the closing day, they offered up their hymn of gratitude to God.

Amroü was of the high tribe of Narazna; the descendants of which had, for time immemorial, filled the sacred office of the priesthood. He was well skilled and deeply read in the religion and the laws of the Hindoos,

and, in an eminent degree, possessed that perfect indifference to all worldly things which the Brahmins account the highest attainment that human virtue can ever reach. Yet, I believe, from this stoical indifference his daughter was excepted; for often, on the close of a summer eve, have I observed the unbidden tear fill his eye as he watched her light and graceful figure retiring from his sight, or saw her gathering flowers of the wild lotus and acacia trees, while, in the guileless simplicity of her heart, she sung some simple melody that spoke its own language to her father's heart; for the air and words could scarcely fail to be those with which, in the innocence of *her* youth, the partner of his earlier life had heen accustomed to rejoice his ear.

I soon became the adopted son of Amroŭ; I conformed to all the customs of his tribe, and by him I was instructed in the deep theology of the Brahmins, as revealed in their

Bedas and other sacred writings. Patiently did I read through the hundred thousand stanzas of which the four Bedas are composed; patiently did I dive into the sciences of astrology and divination; patiently did I peruse the whole forms of their religious rites and ceremonies; patiently did I study the more deep and abstract theories of the creation of matter, and the immortality of the soul; and when these laborious hours were past, highly did I consider myself rewarded by the sweet smiles of the innocent and gentle Zehlima.

Long—long I sojourned on this happy spot. The history of one day might almost serve for that of years; for, save upon the occasion of some sacred festival, or the solemnization of some religious rite, they were all beautiful, and all alike. With the sun the household of Amroü left their silent places of repose; and as his rising beams shone upon the broad

tranquil bosom of the Ganges, the morning ablution, enjoined by the religion of the Hindoos, was performed. Our mornings were then passed together in sauntering through the long and shady groves; climbing the steep sides of the neighbouring mountains; admiring the snowy whiteness of their thousand streams, as they rolled and sparkled on their way, or gaily leaped from rock to rock, like the wild deer of the forest rejoicing in his liberty and strength—and, occasionally, reposing underneath the hanging boughs of the blooming acacia tree.

In these rambles the gentle Zehlima hung upon my arm with the pure and sacred affection of a beloved sister for an only brother, and the good Amroü walked along, pointing out the wonders of nature, and losing no opportunity of directing heart and thought to reverence the great Creator of these beauteous works. Sometimes, again, we rowed upon the

Ganges, and quickly—lightly—beautifully—we glided over its silver tide ; or, resting upon our oars, slowly dropt down its pure unruffled stream. Then Zehlima, with a voice whose sweetness seemed to lull the spirits of the deep to rest, sung the song of innocence, or her excellent father read aloud a portion of that sacred volume which was scarcely ever out of his hand, and the precepts of which were never absent from his mind.

When the increasing heat of the sun warned us to retire, our morning meal was enjoyed under the shady verandah of our dwelling. There, seated amidst clusters of the sweetest flowers, in whose fragrant branches the little Baya birds built their nests, and sported as fearlessly as if no being of the human race were near, we enjoyed our rice and fruits. The hot mid-day hours were devoted to study by Amroü and me, while Zehlima amused herself with some innocent and useful occu-

pation till the period of our afternoon meal, when we again met, blessed and happy in each others' society; and rice and fruits, with pure water from the crystal stream, were again our simple fare.

In the evenings, Zehlima's birds were to be fed—her flowers to be watered—and in fancy's dream I have often thought that these little prisoners fluttered and rejoiced—that these rich flowers raised their drooping heads at her approach. At this hour the Brahmin generally retired to repose, after the labours of the noon; and then—then came the most pure and blessed hour of the whole day—for Zehlima and I wandered forth together, and enjoyed the still, calm beauty of the evening, amidst the sweetness of the surrounding groves. Often—often have we watched the setting sun as he descended in the far west, amidst a bright myriad of amber-coloured clouds, on which he seemed to repose like a

dying warrior on his bed. Often have we admired the splendour with which his last rays tinged the whole surrounding sky, till fancy almost dreamt it saw the golden gates of the West open to receive the retiring monarch to his rest. Often have we lingered on the fragrant banks of the Ganges, admiring the pure tranquillity of its waters, and listening to the distant voices of young and happy beings sporting in its stream, till the closing shades of evening warned us to retire; and then we parted—parted without pain, for we felt secure that we should again meet, and again pass another day of bliss, like that which had but now fled on the wings of joy and love. Thrice happy days—the most blest of a long and weary life—how brightly beautiful does your impress yet seem on memory's desolated waste! There it still dwells—there it still remains—pure as the shroud which envelopes the ashes of the dead, to which a melan-

choly brightness is added from the strong contrast of surrounding gloom! Oh life—life, what are you if deprived of innocence and hope?—the innocent enjoyment of a present—the high hope of another and a better world? I have known you in all your varied hues, and to this conclusion I have at last arrived: that there is no blessing equal to the enjoyment of innocent and sinless days. But away, vain—vain retrospections, and leave me to my rest! Thus time passed swiftly, too swiftly away, while every day brought to my heart the conviction of some new beauty existing in the spotless mind of Zehlima. Pure and single-hearted being, she was not made to contend with the raving tempests of a sinful and a selfish world.

CHAPTER V.

> "Tune your harps
> "Ye angels, to that sound; and thou, my heart,
> Make room to entertain thy flowing joy."
>
> DRYDEN'S SPANISH FRIAR.

> "I grant *my* love imperfect, all
> That mortals by the name miscall,
> Then deem it evil; what thou wilt;—
> But say, oh say, *hers* was not guilt!"
>
> BYRON.

It was not long before I became acquainted with the full growth of the gentle Zehlima's affection; it had sprung up like the beautiful tulip of the east, gradually developing its bright splendour to the eye; and it will create no wonder that to such affection *even I* could not remain insensible.

ᴗ.. had, as usual, strayed to a considerabie uistance through the neighbouring groves, and had reached a shaded and beautiful spot, a favourite retreat, at no great distance from the banks of the river. We could hear the monotonous sound of its waters as they glided on their way—we could see its pure and silvery stream reflecting back the thousand variegated rays of light that shone upon its surface,—and the still, motionless shadow of the stately palm, and drooping shrubs, that grew upon its brink. The golden colour of the waving crops, and the rich appearance of the heavily laden citron and orange trees, told the season of the year to be advanced. A gentle wind sighed, with a soft and melancholy tone, through the long reed-like grass that grew around a neighbouring dingle; it stole with the wild music of an Æolian harp upon the ear. The day had been one of more than common heat—and a heavy sultry

feeling oppressed the evening air. I know not why, but it seemed to weigh upon my spirits too, for I felt more depressed in heart and mind than I had been for many days.

"It is but the effect of heat," I whispered to myself, and looking round, I saw that the same feeling of melancholy weighed for the moment upon the spirit of the light-hearted Zehlima. "Let us rest within our bower," she whispered in almost inaudible accents—and we entered the precincts of our sweet retreat. It was surrounded with blooming shrubs and flowers—a gentle rivulet murmured past it—and within its shadow I had formed a verdant couch of the soft grass that grows upon the banks of the Ganges, and which, when trodden upon or pressed, yields a rich and delicious perfume. On this couch we sat down, and the air was filled with fragrance; the melancholy note of the ringdove sounded in the distance. Neither of us spoke—but we were together—

we were near each other, and that was sufficient. When two, who love, thus meet, there is surely some inward communion of the soul, in which heart answers heart, although no words are spoken ; for to be near, to be with a beloved being, has ever seemed to me to be a calm, reposing happiness—beautiful as the heart of man can wish for, or desire.

Overcome with the heat of the day, the sultriness of the evening, and, it may be, lulled with the stillness of all around, or rather by that monotonous sound that has more of repose in it than even silence itself, Zehlima soon sunk into a gentle slumber—her head dropt upon my shoulder—her loosely-braided hair, of the hue and colour of night, but soft as the silken threads of Cachemire, pressed upon my cheek, and her light graceful hand half rested on my knee. I passed my arm gently, quietly, around her waist to support her in this position; and had any unholy eye been near to

see the Hindoo girl at her repose, the sight of so much innocence and beauty must have drawn tears of repentance and contrition from it. From mine they fell in abundance—aye, even like showers of wintry rain, as I gazed upon her, and their overflowing cooled my burning brain, for they were the first I had shed for many a long year.

I pressed my lips gently upon her open brow, and I heard her softly murmur the only name she knew me by. Even in her sleep she dreamt of me, and it struck a pang to my heart—a bitter pang—when I thought of the unworthy being on whom the affection of one so innocent and beautiful had been bestowed. Tears, it is said, are the sign of a repentant heart, and truly, while mine flowed in abundance, I felt my heart softened within me, and, as it were, a new and ennobling principle, a feeling of purity, spring up, that I had long, long been a stranger to. Then, it seemed to me that I was not alto-

gether unworthy of her love.—No! for when the love of the pure and good, like the mid-day sun, enlightening all it shines upon, is again reflected with a calm and peaceful feeling from the heart which had long lain in darkness and in error, there is room for hope—there is room for repentance—there is room for joy. But that heart must be depraved indeed, which, in the knowledge of its own utter unworthiness, can gain the affections of a pure and heavenly being, and then revel and riot in the death which it knows it must ultimately occasion. *I* could not have done this—for I loved the gentle Zehlima. I loved her because she had first loved me, and I felt grateful, deeply grateful to her, for the peace she had spoken to a wounded heart. Long had I wandered on the earth, if not shunned, at least *not loved* by a single human being. None cared for me, and in utter desolation of heart I had cared for none—love was new to me, and although at first

I had dreamt that I scarcely could be loved, yet when the conviction came, it brought peace with it, and it seemed to me as if I could almost have enjoyed life and the world again. How sweetly can we wander throughout this pilgrimage and support its sorrows, when there is one whose devoted affection lives to share these sorrows with us ;—and, should smiles and joy arise, doubly to enhance their brightness and their value by a glad participation in their bliss.

In the midst of these thoughts the dark certainty suddenly arose, that all I loved must perish from before my eyes—and I pressed the gentle Zehlima to my heart, and again kissed her forehead and her cheek. Oh! that I could have shielded her from the approach of time, or the unerring hand of death, that, sooner or later, must reach every being of the human race.

The touch of my burning lips awoke Zehlima

from her sleep, and she looked in my face with a sweet smile, while a slight, slight blush suffused her cheek as she gently disengaged herself from my encircling arm.

"Why did you allow me to sleep?" she asked, in a half playful, half reproachful tone.

"Nay, Zehlima," I answered, "you should rather be grateful that I did—for see, your languor and weariness are both gone, your spirits are refreshed, and your gaiety restored."

"Well, well," she exclaimed, laughing as she motioned me to rise, "it is sweet to sleep in the arms we love—and my dreams have been so beautiful!"

A deep melancholy feeling stole upon my heart as I rose to join her, and I could not help exclaiming, "Ah! Zehlima, you know not whom you love."

"I love *you*," she replied, with a look of the most innocent surprise.

The simple words, and the tone in which they

were spoken, went to my soul.—I could not resist it, and in the impulse of the moment I clasped her wildly to my heart, and while the tears rushed in torrents from my eyes I kissed her again and again, and inwardly vowed that death alone should ever separate us below. It is yet to be seen how well this vow was kept.

Zehlima trembled with emotion, and for a short time I was forced to support her scarcely conscious form—but this passed, and, with the most confiding innocence, the gentlest of created beings looked in my face, and smiling through the tears that now suffused her eyes, whispered, "Oh! yes, *we love,* and we must be happy." This was all—and it was enough for me—again I pressed her to my heart, and assuredly I felt happy.

It is impossible to conceive any thing more affectingly beautiful than the unsuspecting confidence of Zehlima. She never spoke of constancy, for she knew no falsehood;—she

asked no vows, for she never dreamt that love could be deceitful.

In the society of those we love, time passes all unnoticed and silently away. We marked not the passing hours, till the lengthened shadows of the graceful palms, the hazy and indistinct appearance of the distant bamboo as it drooped upon the river's brink, warned us of the approach of evening. I looked to the West, and I saw the sun descending, red, fiery red—like an angry demon frowning at the approach of night. On his disk one small black cloud rested, thick and dense, but apparently not a hand's breadth in size. There it remained for a short time, motionless and still; but I knew the fatal augury—I knew the signal of the coming storm—I knew how rapidly it would approach, and I hasted to place Zehlima within the shelter of our peaceful home.

Slowly that small black cloud now began to creep along—widely it diffused itself over the

face of the hitherto cloudless skies, and, still resting where it had first appeared, swelled and grew like some fearful thing, till the whole atmosphere around us was darkened with its presence. On it came, heavy and sullen, till with one bright flash its bosom seemed to burst asunder, and volumes of glancing lightnings darted down upon the earth. We were still far from home, and to proceed was now impossible. The streams swelled and raged like torrents—the rain poured down in huge unbroken masses of water—the thick lightnings flashed—and crash followed crash, as if heaven and earth had been mingling in the same wildness of inextricable confusion. Occasionally, violent gusts of wind threatened to uproot the stately palm-trees from their place; and again, in a few seconds, all was calm and still as death. Then, the whole atmosphere became tinged with a deep and dingy red, like the dark reflection of a distant and expiring flame, and in an instant, in less

time almost than the imagination can conceive, the most total, the most absolute and impenetrable darkness succeeded; and the loud thunders rolled, peal upon peal, as if the whole of heaven's artillery had been pointed to the spot. It was dreadful—it was awful—yet for Zehlima alone I feared. She clung to me, trembling and dismayed—the cold, damp dews of fear hung upon her forehead; and her thin silken garments and her long black hair were drenched with rain. I threw my loose upper garment around her, and strove to shelter her from the violence of the storm as we retreated beneath the fanlike leaves of a huge and spreading palm. For myself I cared not. The storm beat and raged against my uncovered head and brow, but I knew that it could not harm me. The lightnings might flash, and the thunders roll, and the wild tempest rave in its fury and its strength; but there I stood, and—but for Zehlima—in the bitterness of my heart, I could

have smiled upon them all. Over me the elements had no power, they possessed no controul. But with Zehlima it was not so;—fearfully she clung around me—fearfully she gasped for breath, while with mute caresses, for in the wildness of that tempest all other sounds were lost, I strove, but, for long, in vain, to reassure and comfort her. At last I partially succeeded, and she had become somewhat more calm and collected, when a flash of lightning, as if the whole heavens had been on fire, struck the palm-tree, under which we stood, and dashed it in ten thousand shattered fragments to the ground. Instantaneous was the loud, long, rolling peal of thunder that succeeded. For a moment the wildness of the shock bewildered and confused me—but I feared not for myself. It was for Zehlima I feared; and of her being I was only assured by the convulsive pressure of her breast as she sought for refuge in my arms, and the fearful, but suppressed sobbing

of her voice, as if her very heart would break. Long and loud did that tremendous peal continue; but at length it passed, and in the somewhat restored light of the evening I looked upon Zehlima;—her eyes were closed—and cold, pale, senseless, and inanimate as marble, was the form that reposed upon my breast. I thought she was dead; and, in the words of the patriarch, I lifted up my voice, and cursed aloud my day.

In that last tremendous explosion the spirit of the storm seemed to have vented all his wrath. With low and sullen murmurs he retired to a distant land; and the pale moon shone forth, and the stars of the evening glimmered in the blue sky, and the winds ceased—and, with the swift and sudden change, peculiar to an eastern clime, all was again still, and calm, and beautiful—when Zehlima, recalled to sensation and to life, opened her eyes upon the scene.

It is true, the marks of the tempest still remained. A few thin watery clouds hung upon the sky, but only veiled, and did not hide its beauty. Upon earth the traces of devastation were more defined and marked. Huge trees lay rent and shattered on the ground—shrubs and flowers were torn from their places by the roots—the beautiful green sward was ploughed up and blackened by the violence of the storm; —but over this desolation we trode with joyful hearts—for the storm was past—Zehlima was safe—we were again together—and we knew that ere another day should pass, even these traces of wildness and of ruin would almost have vanished from the sight.

Already had the disturbed waters returned to their usual state of tranquillity and peace; and innumerable small lights, the offerings of piety and of love, floated down the calm bosom of the Ganges. We paused for a moment to count these lights as they slowly dropped down

the stream, and we thought of the young and happy beings who had placed them there, and were, perhaps, even now watching from a distance their progress on this voyage so sacred to the heart. The current of the stream slowly bore one of them to the spot where we stood; and in the space of a few minutes the pale light was extinguished, and its fragile vessel lay in darkness, a wreck, and stranded upon the shore. "Such," thought I, as I stooped to lift it, "is a true picture of the human heart. How often does it trust its whole freight of happiness to a bark as frail as this, and how soon does it find itself a wreck, in hopeless darkness, laid upon a desert shore." I presented it to Zehlima, and I could see that a momentary paleness overspread her features. I even fancied that a tear for an instant dimmed her eye. "It is a bad omen," she whispered—but she smiled while she spoke. I looked at the frail basket, and I saw that it was filled with the

blossoms of the holy palasa tree, which is sacred to the memory of the dead. I took it from her hand, and dropped it gently upon the stream, and it floated quietly down the river, and we turned away; but neither of us spoke, for the hearts of both were full.

When we reached our home, we found the good Amroü anxious and uneasy about our fate. It is true that he strove to conceal this anxiety, for it accorded not with that indifference to all human things which the worthy Brahmin fancied he had acquired; but I saw the tear-drop moisten his eye, as, with a calm and an apparently indifferent voice, he welcomed our return. Zehlima was still pale, and much and deeply agitated; but Amroü either did not see, or at least he would not notice this,— and Zehlima reclined upon a couch of fragrant flowers, covered with a richly embroidered mantle of the far-famed and beautiful cloth of Masulipatam, partly recovered her composure,

while the old man read a portion from the sacred volume of the Bedas. We then separated for the night, and at parting I pressed the hand of the beautiful Zehlima to my lips, and received a look in return, the beaming kindness of which spoke volumes to my heart. In after days, the winning sweetness of that look often, often rose up in the dreary waste of memory, when in the silent watches of the night I have lain restless and awake upon my bed. But why do I dwell upon such hours as these? They are past, and they never, never can return.

I sunk into a calm and refreshing slumber,—for it was the slumber of a peaceful heart; and I felt as if my long lost and sinful being had at once been redeemed from sorrow and from death. We cannot love without wishing to resemble the object of our love, and I believe it to be true that the affection of the pure in heart has ere now redeemed many from the evil of their ways. Let no one therefore who

is thus pure in heart desert him on whom her love has been bestowed, should she unexpectedly discover that he *has been* unworthy of it. No!—rather let her cherish still the same steadiness of affection till she turn him from his errors; for should she rashly withdraw that only light which cheered his dark and gloomy way, she may perchance bring to herself the pangs of a broken heart and a wounded spirit in the present world; and, in that which is to come, *his* blood will assuredly be inquired of at her hand.

In my sleep, fancy presented to view many bright features of the future; and, when I awoke, as if still continuing the same busy dream, I sketched out long vistas of happiness to come; till the gladness of the morning sun and the beauty of his bursting light warned me to prepare for somewhat of a more active occupation.

I joined Zehlima and Amroû, who were already risen. My gentle Zehlima looked as

innocent and beautiful as a new-blown rose when it has shaken off the pearly drops of a vanished summer shower. We strayed upon the banks of the Ganges, and admired its wide expanse sleeping in calm tranquillity after the raging storm of the preceding evening. The good Amroü took the river for his text, and moralised upon the fluctuating state of all earthly things—the changeable nature of the human passions—the deep deceitfulness of the human heart. "Now," he exclaimed, "it arises in sullen anger, like the waters in the storm of the past night,—anon, it grows calm and tranquil as the softly gliding stream before us; but, alas! even like that stream, it remains liable to be again raised to the fury of a storm by a passing breath of wind."

More he would have said, for the lessons of the good Amroü were endless as the tales of Sadah, but he was interrupted by the loud and joyous shout of a multitude of youthful voices.

We hastened to the spot from whence the sounds proceeded, and, crossing a narrow wooded promontory, came in full sight of a band of youthful maidens and boys assembled upon the bank of the river. Some middle-aged women appeared among them too, and they seemed to be the mothers of these maidens, who were very young. As we drew nigh, we could easily distinguish their gay dresses, and I saw that some peculiar ceremony, with which I was yet unacquainted, was about to be performed. Of many bright and sparkling colours were these dresses formed, and each young maiden had a veil of the scarlet die of Bosrah thrown around her head. Glad young creatures they seemed to be, and the approach of the good Amroŭ was welcomed by them all with acclamations of the loudest joy. He bestowed his blessing on them, and then I saw that each youthful maiden carried in her hand a grotesquely dressed figure, which might have

been mistaken for the plaything of a child. In truth, they were so many wooden dolls, richly but grotesquely adorned, and each had a small string of pearls wound around its neck.

I looked at Zehlima, to try if I could read in her ever-speaking countenance, an explanation of the appearances before me. She merely smiled; and when I turned to Amroü, he was absorbed in serious meditation, which, to me, the occasion seemed not to require. Amroü, however, looked on all things with the eye of a philosopher.

On a signal given by the matrons of the party, the young girls advanced, and with one accord, threw their gaily dressed dolls into the river. The young boys sprung in after them, and with short sticks, which they held in their hands, beat the waters till every trace of substance floating on their surface had disappeared. Wild and loud were the halloos with which this ceremony was accompanied;

and well were these boys encouraged in their work by the exhortations of the matrons of the party. The young girls were motionless and silent, while Zehlima, in a gentle voice, whispered the words of kindness and affection to each in her turn.

It was a strange sight to see the comparatively old usurping the noise and gaiety of the young, while *they* remained motionless and still as so many Faheers of the Desert. But the ceremony was at an end; the boys retreated from the river, and making a low salaam, first to the water—for to every thing animate or inanimate a Hindoo makes his salaam—then to the good Amroŭ, vanished speedily from our sight. The matrons and the young girls, too, paid their respects to the Brahmin; but it was done in a more orderly way, and their retreat was effected in a more respectful manner than that of their young allies. We, too, bent our steps homeward; and I could not resist forth-

with asking an explanation of the apparently unmeaning ceremony I had seen. From the smile on Zehlima's countenance, I knew that nothing of a sacred or a serious nature could be connected with it; but her smile was changed into laughter at the grave and solemn tone in which I asked the question. The natural gaiety of her spirits, however, was somewhat checked by the presence of her father; and she informed me that the young girls were now of an age to be betrothed; and that the ceremony signified, that they henceforth threw away all childish things.

"But why," I asked, "cast so many goodly pearls upon the water, and employ means also to ensure their destruction?"

"The pearls," she answered in her gentle voice, "are an offering to the river god; and were one trace of them, or of the images they adorn, to remain floating upon the water, it would be deemed a most unlucky omen."

"And have you, Zehlima," I asked, "have you cast away all childish things?"

There was little meaning in the question, but she blushed and smiled; while the good Amroŭ, taking every thing in its most literal sense, gravely answered, that it was long since Zehlima had thrown aside her dolls.

But why do I dwell on these moments? This is a question that I often ask myself, but I can find no satisfactory answer to it. The retrospection is bitter to my heart, for it recalls days of innocent enjoyment and peace that I know are for ever gone. It is like the feelings of the prisoner, who, in the desolation of his dungeon, still remembers those early days, in the brightness of which he can never, never hope to bask again. Yet, there is, I know not what of a melancholy enjoyment in thus recalling to recollection the vanished hours of sunshine amidst the darkness of surrounding storms. It soothes the spirit, and it speaks of

peace to the broken and the withered heart: and if thus, in the memory of the past, we can snatch one hour from the miseries of a wretched existence, who will blame the weary soul that enjoys so perishable a dream?

And is this my answer?—Yes!—And it is an enjoyment that has, at least, this advantage to boast of—that it interferes not with the pleasures or the occupations of friend or foe.

CHAPTER VI.

'But let the veil be dropped, and darkness shroud,
Within its deep impenetrable cloud,
Foul deeds like these, till ev'n their very name
Shall be forgotten, or but linked with shame.'

ANON.

KIND and open-hearted as the good Amrou had ever been, there was one subject upon which he betrayed a constant and uniform reserve. When I talked of my affection for Zehlima—when I expressed a wish that he would sanction our union—he either evaded my questions altogether, or immediately turned to another subject of discourse. I could not divine the reason of this reserve. He certainly loved me; and if he did not directly encourage, at

least he threw no obstacle in the way of our affection. "What can he mean?" was a question I constantly asked myself.—Alas! it was too soon answered; and in a fearful way. But I must not anticipate.

On the following morning I again ventured upon the subject. He looked at me with kindness beaming in his eyes. "You have preserved my child," he said, "probably from death; and yet, perhaps, it had been better for you both that she had perished."

"Perished!" I exclaimed, with an involuntary shudder.

"Yes!" he continued, "for in another state of existence she might have been your own. I believe it to be destined that one day she shall be yours, but not while her soul remains clothed in its present garb."

I looked enquiringly in the speaker's face, for I did not at that moment remember, that the belief in the transmigration of souls was

universal among the Hindoos. He understood my look; and although I had uttered no words, he seemed to answer my inward thoughts, when he continued, "I know not in what form or shape you may hereafter meet, but in the present state of existence she is destined for another end."

He had never said so much before: but he paused, as if unwilling to continue the subject. I could not, however, resist asking him, "And do you believe the soul of that gentle being may yet animate a form of the brute creation?"

"I will answer you," he said, "by asking another question: "Is the soul created to die? —because, if it be not, it must animate some substantial form. It cannot exist in the vacuity of space; and as little can it remain the tenant of this crushed and ruined frame, when it descends again to the dust from which it sprung."

"No!" I exclaimed, "but, as a spirit, it will

exist either in the presence of Him who created it, or in a state of lasting alienation from Him, till the day of final retribution and judgment, when it will again be clothed with its long forgotten form, and receive condemnation or reward, according to the deeds it hath done in the flesh."

It has well been said, "that there are no opinions too extravagant or ridiculous to find a place in the mind of man." The good Amroŭ shook his head: "This cannot be," he gravely continued; "at death, the form which the soul at present animates, is reduced to ashes and scattered to the winds. There are yet four hundred thousand years of the fourth age of the world to run; and how, then, in the lapse of this long, long period, can the invisible atoms of every human frame be again collected in its original form?—or, granting that it could be so, what, I would ask, has become of the countless myriads of souls and bodies of those who

have died during the millions of years which composed the three past ages of our world? The infinity of space could not have contained them, were the doctrine you contend for true. But nothing, my son, is created in vain, and the soul, when dislodged from the tenement it now inhabits, immediately flies to and re-animates another frame; although the perceptions of its earlier life and former state of existence then vanish from the mind."

"And if it be so," I asked; "if the perceptions of our present state of existence thus vanish from the mind, where is the future enjoyment of those who love, or what can they look for or expect beyond the present world?"

"I know not," he answered, "but I know there is but one life-giving principle which animates the whole world, and that the great Being from whom this principle emanates has himself been made manifest in the flesh in

nine different forms and shapes during the ages that have passed. We are all component parts of this principle, but, unless there were some form to animate, the principle itself could not exist. *It* cannot, however, die; and therefore, when the frail machinery of one form is worn out and exhausted, it immediately flies to, and animates another, till that too, in like manner, is exhausted; and then it animates another, and so on, till the end of all things, when the emancipated soul flies from the trammels of this earth, and enters into a state of everlasting happiness and bliss. Yet do not fancy that I say the souls of the pure and virtuous can ever descend to animate the forms of the brute creation. No—those endowed with the perfection of human goodness at once attain the rank of deities; those again who had been filled with unlawful and evil passions receive again the forms of the human race; and it is only those who have been im-

mersed in darkness, and whose every thought was evil, that are condemned to expiate their sin by a long train of sorrows and of suffering in the forms of the brute creation. That rewards and punishments, too, may be duly apportioned, each of these conditions is again divided into three separate and distinct classes. Of the souls who receive"—But I will not tire the patience of my reader by the repetition of the history of a doctrine, which, I trust, ere this time, will have almost, if not entirely, vanished from the mass of superstitions with which this terrestrial world has ever been crowded and perplexed. The concluding remark of the good Amroŭ alone I will record: in it he admitted that one class of souls, on their escape from mortal thraldom, became at once absorbed in the divine essence, and were for ever exempted from the pains of transmigration—those of the Brahmins of the most exalted piety—of the most profound me-

ditation—and who had ever practised that exquisite abstemiousness which dries up the strength and vigour of the mortal frame.

"But why," I asked, "why should every pure soul not at once, when escaping from its first habitation, fly into this state of bliss? —why should it linger here, and seek to reanimate another form in a world where it can meet with nothing but tribulation and sorrow?"

"Because it was so predestined;" was his answer. "Would you have the man who has stolen the gold of a priest, and who, according to the doctrines of Menŭ, must pass one thousand times into the bodies of spiders, snakes, and crocodiles, at once spring from a world of retribution to animate the excellent essence of divinity—or would you have the slayer of a Brahmin, whose soul must expiate its crime by animating the filthy carcase of a hog, be allowed to pass into that of a human

being ?—No, no ! this would be the subversion of every law, moral and divine."

Inwardly I smiled at the strangeness of these doctrines—but I made no answer, and the old man shook his head while he turned away to prepare for his attendance at the great festival of Juggernaut, of the celebration of which that day happened to be the first.

It is not at present my intention to enter into a minute detail of the fearful rites which accompany the celebration of this festival during the nine days of its continuation. I merely narrate what came under my own observation, and that was enough to induce me to look upon mankind and man with more special abhorrence than I had ever done before.

We bent our steps towards the nearest temple of Juggernaut, which, however, lay at some considerable distance from our calm and peaceful habitation. The wide forest intervened between us, but soon after we had

passed its verdant glades, and left the refreshing perfume of its many shrubs and flowers behind, our approach to the scene of desolation and of horror was marked by the myriads of human bones that lay whitening in the sun.

"What" I whispered to myself "has become of the life-giving principle which once animated the forms of these unhappy pilgrims?" And I fell into a deep train of meditation as I walked along over what seemed more like a paved way of human bones than a place for the human foot to tread.

But my meditations were soon interrupted, and I was recalled to a full sense of the situation in which I stood, by the almost insufferable effluvia of the carcases which lay dead or dying in every direction, as if the place of peace over which I trode had been but recently the scene of a fierce and desolating warfare.

One feature in this fearful scene I never can forget. A young and beautiful female lay upon the ground, and, within a few paces of the spot where she lay, we were obliged of necessity to pass. Two innocent and prattling babes sat by her side; but she was dead, and that side was torn and lacerated by the wolves and dogs that almost in the light of day prowled around in quest of their horrid food. I approached the innocent beings, and asked them where their home lay. They smiled in my face, and answered, "We have no home but where our mother is." "Poor children!" I exclaimed, "Ye must seek another home." But they would not leave their mother. They clasped the dead and inanimate form around the neck; they kissed its pale, and cold, but still beautiful cheek; and wild was their outcry, and heartbreaking their lamentation, when the attempt was made to separate them from the mother of their love.

They said she only slept: for they knew not what *death* was—but, ere the shades of night fell upon the earth, they too, I believe, slept in the same everlasting sleep.

Loud were the shouts of triumph which greeted our ears as we approached the Temple of Juggernaut. Immense were the multitudes that thronged around, and thousands upon thousands would no more have been missed than a single grain from a handful of the finest sand. Each individual of this congregated mass, however, made way for the good Amroü, and in a few minutes' space we stood in front of the idol, raised upon its enormous car, and surrounded by a whole host of priests and devotees.

The first sensations which I experienced on approaching it were those of horror and disgust. But, alas! how were these sensations in a tenfold degree encreased before the ceremonies of that day were past. The car, or

tower on which the idol was raised, stood at the height of many feet above the ground. Its sides were adorned with massive and enduring sculpture, representing the most lascivious forms and images which the mind of the wicked could suggest. The platform on the top was graced with an innumerable crowd of monsters—half man—half beast—in every variety and shape, and in the midst of these the idol itself, a huge mis-shapen block of wood, was placed. Its visage was painted black, its mouth was of a bloody colour, its arms were of gold, and its apparel was of the richest and most variegated coloured silks. There it sat, in horrid, horrid listlessness, upon its elevated throne, while the priests and their assistants bowed themselves before it, and, with the most indecent attitudes and gestures, sought to propitiate its favour and its grace. Loud and long were the shouts of the multitude, as men, women, children, all pressed

forward, to lay, if it might be, even a finger upon the ropes that dragged the stupendous car. Many were the worn-out and travel-soiled pilgrims who were crushed to death in the vain and empty struggle; but loud were the plaudits which they who died met with, and a smile remained upon their countenances even in the bitter hour of death.

At length the idol moved. The enormous wheels, upon which it was supported, creaked and groaned beneath its weight, and the deeply-indented ground shewed the immensity of pressure that rolled along its surface. In a short space it stopped, for no exertion of human strength could move it for any length of time. Then the worship of the god commenced.

The chief priests advanced, and with many a low salaam began to recite a long roll of obscene and indecent stanzas. "These are the songs," he exclaimed, "with which the god is delighted. It is but when he is pleased that

his car will move." Accordingly, it did move a few paces in advance, when again it stopped, and anon, a youthful being was brought forward; to attempt, if it might be, something still more lascivious to propitiate his god. He began to caper—but I cannot, will not, carry on more of the horrible descriptions. Fancy cannot picture—the imagination cannot conceive—the abominations of this worship. I turned away in sickness of heart, and in utter loathing and disgust from the sight. But a loud and renewed shout fell upon my ear, and, involuntarily, I turned round, and I saw an emaciated and worn-out pilgrim, with a kind of supernatural strength, and a wild devotion gleaming in his eyes, force his way through the surrounding crowd, and prostrate himself on his face in the very course of the terrific car, and with outstretched arms and legs await unmoved the consummation of his fate. On rolled the ponderous wheels, and ere a minute

had elapsed the misguided wretch lay crushed, dismembered, broken—a shapeless mass of flesh—and scarcely to be distinguished from the dust amongst which he was almost concealed from sight. Loud songs of praise accompanied this act of self-devotion, for the multitude believed that the victim would be received as a favoured child by Juggernaut, and recalled into life in a state of everlasting happiness and joy.

Alas! how deeply did the bitter gnawings of remorse, and the pangs of a corroding conscience prey upon my heart, when I remembered that my unhappy doom might yet lead me to witness many a scene, as disgusting in its detail, and as horrible in its execution, as that I had but now looked upon. I would fain have retired from the place, but the pressure of the crowd around me prevented the possibility of moving till the *festivities* of the day were over.

With a loathing heart I was forced to keep my place, and look upon that which my soul abhorred. At length, however, the sun set, and often as I had seen him set in the beautiful West, with a feeling of heartfelt gladness that another day of wretchedness and sorrow had gone past, and a night which perchance might bring a few hours of forgetfulness succeeded, I know not that I ever witnessed his descent with feelings of gratitude equal to those which I now experienced.

Worn out, fatigued, and jaded, alike in body and in mind, I hastened to retrace my weary way to the peaceful habitation I had left. Amroü and Zehlima remained behind to await the conclusion of the festival; but, as in the silence and the darkness of the night I trode alone through the perfumed glades of our own beautiful and enchanting forest, one thought—one reflection—brightened my heart, like a solitary sunbeam shining in the desert waste,

amidst all the desolation occasioned by the scenes of horror I had witnessed. I had watched my gentle Zehlima, and I saw that her heart was not in these scenes. When the obscene stanzas of the priests were shouted forth, she had closed her ears. When the indecent exhibitions were made, she had shut her eyes and bent them to the ground. Her cheek was pale--pale with horror and affright —and it appeared to me as if she would willingly have fled from a scene in which she was *compelled* to bear a part. But Zehlima was of the highest caste, her presence could not be dispensed with; and, to me, she never looked more innocently beautiful than when arrayed in her garments of pure and spotless white, with the simple adornment of light rings of gold around her ankles and her arms, she stood in this scene of horror, with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks, as if in her very soul she loathed and detested those festivities of guilt

and sin. She was more like an angel of light, sent down from its own sinless world to witness that which it had never seen or known before, than a being of this polluted earth, and I felt an inward thrill of gratitude and joy run through my whole frame, when I reflected that Zehlima was still as innocent and uncorrupted in heart as I had ever fancied her to be.

On the last day of the festival I retraced my steps across the forest, in the hope of meeting Zehlima and her father returning from its celebration. For a short time I loitered slowly along the banks of the Ganges. I then passed the beautiful and verdant spot where, on the evening of the storm, Zehlima had slumbered in my arms. A single note of music falling upon the ear, like a chord struck upon the strings of memory, will often recall to the mind scenes that have long been past and gone—so will the sight of a simple flower—yet it is not in these trifles, but in the asso-

ciations connected with them, and the feelings awakened by these associations, that the soul of memory dwells. It will not then be matter of surprise that the image of Zehlima arose before my eyes in the guileless simplicity and innocence of that never-to-be-forgotten night.

"Can the mind of that child of nature," I exclaimed, "be polluted with an evil thought?" The answer to this question arose at once from my heart to my lips,—"Oh, no! for even the mysteries of her faith are seen with averted looks when there is aught of impurity in their celebration." Beautiful being—she knew not —she dreamt not of sin; and, in the innocence of her heart, she thought that man must be as pure, even when she beheld him engaged in the performance of those rites, which the native delicacy of her mind taught her to turn from, although she never imagined that sin or shame could dwell in the service of the temple.

Ere long, I emerged from the shade of the last giant palm that towered upon the outskirts of the forest, and bending my steps towards a gentle eminence ascended to its summit, and with a beating heart and anxious look, gazed forward in the direction in which I knew Zehlima and her father must appear. But no living being moved in the long and dreary tract before me. I turned round and sat down upon the ruined step of a very ancient tomb, and, as I looked upon it, I wondered in which of the ages of the world—all of which were alike familiar to me—he who now slept beneath that tomb had breathed, and lived, and moved, as I had done in his day, and as I still did, long centuries after he had ceased to be.

"Oh! that I could slumber in the same dreamless rest," was the reflection that passed through my mind,—but this was a vain wish,

and in the very spirit of restlessness I arose and trode to and fro upon the summit of that gentle eminence, as if the motion of my body could have stilled the workings of my mind.

I had not pursued this occupation many minutes, when my attention was attracted by a pale thin curling wreath of smoke that ascended, apparently, from the extremity of the plain, that lay beneath my feet. Insensibly I watched its progress as it rose, and fancy pictured a thousand different images in its thin and vapoury substance. But life and being were at the base of that slender column, for I saw busy movements to and fro, although I could not separate or distinguish figures, nor the operation in which they were engaged. That listlessness of mind, however, which the want of occupation inspires, prompted me to turn my steps towards the busy scene. Ere long I formed an atom in the crowed as-

sembled there, and I beheld a scene, the import of which I did not at first exactly comprehend.

The earth and the sand of the plain were dug up, till a large square pit of several feet in depth was formed. Around this pit the multitude was assembled. In the midst of it a pile of dried wood, sprinkled over with the powder of saffron, and the oil of cocoa and palm-trees, was erected, and on this pile the dead body of a Hindoo of the higher caste was stretched at length. There he lay in his last and silent slumber, while the mourners around beat their breasts and uttered screams and cries more horrible and wild than the human imagination can conceive.

"How well they must have loved him," was the thought that past through my mind; "he must have been a kind master and a faithful friend." As I turned I beheld one,—a gentle and beautiful being, who uttered no cries, who

shed no tears, but whose pale cheek, and livid lips, and fixed and vacant looks, spoke more of agony of heart than the combined outcries of all the mourners there. She was young—very young—yet she was the widow of him who lay stretched upon that pile. I could not divine whether the deep agony of her countenance proceeded from grief or from terror. I had often heard of the enthusiasm and rapture with which widows mounted the funeral pile of their husbands—of their firm and dauntless step—of their eyes sparkling with animation—of every symptom, save those of sorrow and of fear. But I saw none of these here; and to me it appeared as if, from perfect agony of mind, the poor creature was already more dead than alive. Ever and anon a cold thrill of horror seemed to pervade her frame. She trembled—she shuddered—and in these involuntary motions she exhibited the only signs of life I had observed.

Short, however, was the time allowed for thought. The preparations were completed, and three or four Brahmins approached the devoted widow. She was incapable of speech, and if she had not been so, no word or cry could possibly have been heard amidst the astounding shouts and yells of the multitude, and the incessant noise of a thousand instruments, beat with a demoniacal fury for the purpose of drowning the last shrieks of the expiring victim. These Brahmins supported her beneath the arms, and in this manner she was led to the fatal pile. Then her hands and her feet were bound, and she was lifted on it, and laid down beside the husband of her youth. He had been more than three times her own age, and, in the common course of nature must have been expected to die first; so that, it may be said, during her wedded life she could have looked forward to nothing but this final consummation of its bliss. Yet when

it came, she was not prepared for it, nor did she meet it with the alacrity of one who believes that she goes to join for ever the object of her first love.

The cries and shouts were redoubled—the instruments were beat with a louder noise—and amidst their astounding clamour several Brahmins approached, and at the same moment set fire to every corner of the pile. In an instant it was one blaze of fire—high, bright, and fierce. I know not whether the unhappy being screamed—if she did, no ear could have heard it; yet, ere the flames had completely covered her from sight, methought I saw one faint and feeble struggle, as if she would fain have left that burning bed of torture. But it might be fancy, for the furious and increasing flames soon concealed the expiring agonies of nature from my sight.

I deemed that the tragedy was now over. In this, however, I was wretchedly mistaken.

While these flames blazed fierce and high, I observed several well-dressed women approach, and taking each other by the hand dance around the pile to the chaunt of their own wild and melancholy song. I fancied this to be some unmeaning ceremony, but great was my horror and dismay when, the fire having ignited the light garments of one of these women, I beheld her forthwith cast herself upon the blazing pile. In like manner so did they all, one after the other; and when I enquired the meaning of this multiplied sacrifice, I was told that they were devoted and affectionate slaves who had loved their mistress, and vowed to perish in the same fire by which she was consumed. "God of heaven!" I exclaimed, as I turned with shuddering horror from the scene, "Can such unholy sacrifice be permitted in thy sight!"

I walked quickly from the place, and I soon beheld Zehlima and her father at no great dis-

tance before me. Ere long I joined them, and the glad surprise that sparkled in the eyes of the innocent Zehlima, as she bounded forward to salute me, almost banished from my mind the disagreeable impression left by the scene I had just witnessed. But it was yet too recent to be quite effaced—and in answer to the enquiries of the good Amroŭ I narrated all that I had seen. He listened to me in silence, and methought he seemed to await some remark that might lead him to judge of the opinion I had formed regarding these unholy rites.

"Surely," I exclaimed, "it cannot be that affection leads to sacrifices such as these;—at least, in that which I have but now witnessed, love, I am certain, bore no part."

"It may be," said Amroŭ in a calm unmoved tone, "that affection is not always the primary cause which leads to this sacrifice of duty, and it is matter to mourn over that it

should be so. But I, am no blinded zealot and, with you, I believe that in many instances it is the effect of a deep-rooted prejudice that cannot be overcome,—In her early youth every maiden is taught by her mother that it is highly praiseworthy and virtuous to mingle her ashes with those of her husband at his death; in her riper years the husband has no interest to turn the current of her thoughts into another channel—for such opinions tend much to preserve subordination, to secure proper attendance when the hand of sickness is laid upon the sufferer, or the noiseless step of death approaches to his bed; and, finally, it may be, to prevent the wife from prematurely cutting the thread of that existence upon which her own depends."

"Oh, no—no!" exclaimed the innocent and enthusiastic Zehlima, "this cannot be. Will not love and affection secure all those ends you have enumerated? Do *they* not prompt

unwearied attendance in the hour of sickness and of death? Do they not guard and protect the thread of that existence which they cannot bear to see cut off? And do they not," she continued, while her voice sunk to the most beautiful and softened pathos, and her large dark eyes filled with a sudden gush of tears, "do they not prompt the solitary and heart-broken mourner to join the object of her first and best affections, where not even death can come to sever hearts or hands again?"

I could have sprung forward and embraced the gentle being who thus undauntedly stood forward the champion of her sex. I knew the source from whence her strong and excited feelings sprung. Her heart was at that moment filled with its first love, and—oh! when the heart is thus occupied, how little room is there for any other thought or consideration to dwell within it. The ray of light or of reason that would pierce to its innermost recess is cast

away, and the bare idea of separation, if it be that dread separation which, sooner or later, all must know, is far more horrible than the dread of death itself.

But I restrained my feelings, or rather the expression of them, while the grave Amroŭ, looking fondly on the animated speaker, answered, "It may be, my daughter, that in some instances affection will induce the surviving widow to make this meritorious sacrifice; it is one which will undoubtedly secure to herself a residence in the blessed Swarga, for a period of years as numerous as the thirty-five millions of hairs on the human body. As the snake Catchŭ forcibly drags the serpent from his earth, so, according to the Sanscrit text, the affectionate widow will bear her husband from the place of punishment, and with him enjoy the delights of heaven while fourteen Indras reign.—But, nevertheless, the instinct which leads to self-preservation I be-

lieve to be the strongest that is implanted in the human mind. It is well, therefore, for the honour of our country and religion, that the necessity of complying with its customs is fenced round with barriers too strong to be easily burst asunder. Should any unfortunate so far forget what is due to her country, her religion, and her friends, as to avail herself of the possibility of escape,—she would from that hour live a degraded and dishonoured being. No Hindoo would, at any time, or under any circumstances, associate with her; she would be accounted utterly infamous, and execration upon execration would be heaped upon the head of her whose conduct had thus brought dishonour upon the religion of her country."

I smiled within myself when I heard of the obligations which compelled an unfortunate female to become the victim of so barbarous a custom; and I thought how easy it would

have been to answer the grave Amroü, that if the instinct which led to self-preservation were so strongly implanted in the human mind, it could scarcely be overcome by the minor considerations he had detailed. To those who are attached to this life the feeling of self-preservation is indeed strong; but with me,—oh! with me it was far otherwise, and often, often, with a glad heart and rejoicing spirit, would I have laid down the load of my weary and protracted life. For a moment my imagination dwelt upon the possibility of doing so, and, strange to say, the thought brought a calm and soothing feeling to my heart. But it passed away, like the vapoury cloud of a summer morning, when I remembered the impossibility of that which I had so sinfully imagined. I shook my head in utter despondency when I thought of my unhappy fate; but at that moment the light form of the innocent Zehlima glided before my eyes, and with a revulsion of

feeling, as delightful as it was sudden, I whispered to myself, " Not now—not now"—as we once more entered the beautiful enclosures around our calm and peaceful dwelling.

CHAPTER VII.

"Oh! can a father's heart do this?"

OLD PLAY.

"She who, when others stood, or sat around,
Had climbed upon his knee, and wound
Her little arms around her father's neck;
And kissed his brow—his lips—his cheek—and drew
Her playful hands and rosy fingers through
His long grey hairs."

ANON.

I HAVE said that the reason of Amroŭ's silence on the subject of our union was soon explained. It was so: and in the silent course of time the day of explanation had now arrived.

Early in the morning I had stolen from my place of rest to wander alone and in silence by the banks of the sacred Ganges. I could now

enjoy my solitary rambles, for I felt within the blessed consciousness that I was beloved. Oh! what a peace-speaking thought this is to the heart that has long been tossed upon the troubled waves and stormy sea of life. The cold and thankless world vanishes from its view;—all that disturbed its peace, and darkened the brightness of its past hours, is lost in the long and beautiful vista of happiness that is stretched before anticipation's eye; till, at last, in fancy, it anchors in that calm haven where no storms can reach, no tempest come to disturb its repose again.

But, alas! how often does it happen that, even in the hour of such delightful anticipation, when all around seems to bask in pure and cloudless sunshine, a dark cloud lours upon the horizon, ready to dash its overwhelming tempest upon the devoted sufferer's head. Let him then look forward to the enjoyment of repose and peace. Let him, in anti-

cipation, revel in their delights, and imagine that years to come may be loaded with blessings he has never known—for in these, at last, will the sum of his enjoyment be. These years *will* come; but while he remains in a world where there are clouds to dim its sunshine, and storms to mar its beauty, he cannot expect to repose in lasting calm and peace. Oh! will man never, never learn to judge of the future by the past.

My mind was filled with thoughts which came crowding upon it, clothed in beauty's garb, and I lay down upon a heap of fragrant Cushna grass that clustered at the root of a holy palasa-tree. I gazed upon the Ganges floating in majestic tranquillity before my eyes, and I had almost fancied myself transported to some fairy regions of delight, when the sound of human voices fell upon my ear, and dissipated the beauty of my dream.

One of these voices I easily recognized to be that of Amroü; with the other I was unacquainted, but the words that fell from the speaker's mouth soon gave me to understand that he was one of the principal Brahmins, and chief priest of the temple of the abominable Molock. They approached the place where I lay reclined—but I was concealed from their view, as they likewise were from mine, by the golden clusters of the champac flowers which hung in thick and beautiful luxuriance beyond the palasa-tree.

"The Dusrah feast approaches," were the words which fell from the stranger's mouth; "is the heart of my son prepared for the sacrifice?"

"Yes, my father," answered Amroü, "it is prepared; but oh! the feelings of this world have struggled fiercely in my breast. It is hard to part with the daughter of my love—

my beautiful Zehlima—and oh! for the hand of a father himself to strike the blow—Alas! alas!"

His voice sounded to me as if sobs had choked his utterance. But that of the incarnate fiend continued. "My son, check this inordinate affection for earthly things, and study to possess that indifference to every thing in this state which forms the highest attainable point of human virtue. The goddess demands the sacrifice of the fairest maiden, and where can a fairer than Zehlima be found? She, too, from her youth, has been predestined for this sacred end, and who can oppose the hand of destiny, or who would seek to drag her from a fate which confers everlasting bliss and honour on herself, and the prosperity and happiness of all with whom she is connected?"

"My father," answered Amroü, in a firm and collected voice, "I will not blench from the sacrifice, or hesitate in that which duty

and religion alike call upon me to do. It is written in the institutes of Menū, that, what is not to be, will not be; but it is also written, that what is pre-doomed, the hand of man cannot avert.—I *will* be firm.—But, father, she has sat upon my knee, and her fingers have wandered through my grey hairs, and she has spoken to me in the voice of love, while my arm entwined her slender waist, and my hand was raised to bless her;—and must that hand now ——" Again a suffocating feeling seemed to choke his utterance, and I heard no more, for the voices of the two were lost in the distance to which they had wandered.

But I had heard enough—all was now explained, and I no longer wondered at the mysterious reserve with which Amroŭ had always treated the subject of our union. My gentle Zehlima, truly, was destined for another end—and that end—Oh, horrible! horrible!—A sickness of heart came over me, and it was

long ere I could rise from the ground on which I lay. The Dusrah festival was indeed at hand, and, during that festival, I knew it was the custom, yearly, to immolate a youthful maiden to the vindictive goddess, Kula Dewary. This deity delights in human blood, and I had seen her representation in the temple, covered with red flowers, while her three fiery eyes glared fearfully from the squalid countenance they adorned. It was to this goddess my gentle Zehlima was destined to be an offering. I shuddered as the thought crossed my mind, and a cold perspiration stood in thick and heavy drops on my brow.

He who has seen or heard of the immolation of the unhappy victim, will not wonder at the feelings I experienced. He will rather wonder, that, knowing the destiny of her who had twined herself around the fondest hopes and wishes of a broken heart, and with her glad presence and joyous looks illuminated that which had so

long lain in the depths of darkness and despair,—reason remained upon her throne.

During the first nine days of that festival, the prayers of her votaries are offered to the vindictive goddess. On the evening of the tenth day a grand repast is prepared, to which many are invited. Among the many, the intended victim has her place. With her food an intoxicating drug is secretly mixed. When this drug begins to take effect, the master of the house, or her father, if the victim have a father, and be of the highest caste, unattended, takes her to the temple of the goddess. He there leads her three times round the idol—he instructs her to prostrate herself before it, and while the unsuspecting victim is in this attitude of devotion, he takes that opportunity of stabbing her to the heart.

Oh! this is work for a father's hand! With the greatest care he then collects the blood into an earthen bowl prepared for the purpose,

which he first applies to the lips of the ferocious goddess, and afterwards sprinkles the remainder of it over the limbs of the distorted idol. The body of the unfortunate victim is then deposited in a hole dug at her feet, where it rests in peace, while the father returns to his family and his home, and the remainder of the evening is spent in revelry and mirth ; all being convinced that by this praise-worthy act the favour of the blood-thirsty deity has been propitiated for a series of many years.

This was the fate to which my gentle and innocent Zehlima was destined! I asked myself if it could be that the good Amroŭ—the man whom I had been accustomed to look to with reverence and respect—was to be the actor in so horrible a deed? I asked myself this question—but, alas! the answer was very plain. After the conversation I had heard, there was no room for doubt. His well-beloved child—his innocent, his beautiful, his guileless off-

spring, was to fall by her father's hand. The victim of a blood-thirsty superstition, she was to be offered up on the altar of a ferocious and infernal goddess: and, as if death alone were not attended with sufficient bitterness, the blow was to be struck by the hand she had adored! Cruel, stern, unrelenting father! had you no bowels of mercy—had you no compassion for the last and only offspring of your loins?—Was every feeling of pity and of love crushed within your heart?—Yes, yes;—and Zehlima was doomed, indeed, without the chance or prospect of escape.

In one short hour every sentiment of my mind had undergone a total revolution with regard to the man I had revered and loved. I could not again look upon him as I had been accustomed to do. I could not regard him, except with those feelings of horror and disgust, which, in a virtuous mind, are ever inseparable from the contemplation of the being,

who coolly meditates the commission of an abominable crime. God knows how little of virtue I had to boast of, as existing within a heart already blackened by a crime of no common dye; and yet I could not, without shuddering, contemplate one who so coolly and so cruelly resolved to imbue his hands in the blood of his only and his well-beloved child. I knew how strong, how irresistible, the overwhelming influence of superstition was; but I knew not, till now, that it could even cut asunder the fondest ties of human love, and crush within its grasp the warmest feelings of the human heart.

Great God—how unsearchable are thy ways! Was this the man whom I had been wont to regard, as possessing every virtue that adorned the human mind? Was this the man who would not have wounded, far less have killed, a reptile or an insect? Alas, alas! what kind

of religion was that which confined its doctrines of gentleness and mercy to the brute creation, while its gloomy and malignant principles made the sacrifice of every human feeling, and the outpouring of human blood, meritorious acts in the eyes of the deities of its worship!

These ideas passed through my mind as rapidly as the lightning's glance darts over the withered and the blasted heath; and like it, too, they left their scorching trace behind. But this was no time for idle thought. I arose, smote my forehead, and fled—fled like a madman—towards the peaceful habitation of our love. Alas! how different were the feelings I experienced upon entering it, from those with which, a few short hours before, I had departed from it. The morning sun may see many a one leave his own home with a peaceful and contented heart; but who can say that its noonday heat will see him return in the same happy

guise? None—none; for the events of the next hour, aye, of the next minute, are hidden in the womb of time.

When I entered the cottage, I found Amroŭ there before me. I started when I saw him; and, with ill-disguised horror, gazed upon his face. I fancied I saw his hands reeking with the blood of the innocent, and I closed my eyes and pressed my palms forcibly against them, as if for ever to exclude so horrible an object from their sight. A gentle touch fell upon my hands, and strove to draw them from my eyes—a gentle arm rested upon my shoulder, and a gentle voice, in its softest accents, once more enquired if I were ill.

"No, no;" I answered in a quick and hurried voice, "not ill—not ill"—but as I spoke I felt the hand of Amroŭ laid upon my head, and I sprung from his polluting touch as I would have sprung from that of an infuriated demon, or the deadly bite of an envenomed

snake. I sat down upon the low couch from which Zehlima had arisen, and my full and suffocating heart found relief in the bitter tears that fell from my eyes, and, forcing their way through my closed fingers, rolled, like drops from a thunder-cloud, upon the ground.

I believe Amroü and Zehlima imagined some temporary derangement had seized upon my brain. I spoke not a word; but, secure of Zehlima's safety for the present, I arose, and again darting from the cottage, sought the recesses of the forest, where, unseen, I might give vent to the feelings of an overcharged and bursting heart. Oh! what had *I* to do with life—what had *I* to do with love?—Nothing—nothing—surely less than nothing! Yet, ere the evening cloud closed in—ere the darkening shadows of night fell upon the earth, I had told the gentle Zehlima the fate for which she was reserved.

'I shall never forget the firmness with which

she heard the fearful tale: no tear fell from her eyes, no working of her countenance betrayed the agitation of her mind—no trembling in her slender frame told that she knew a single fear. It was in the moment of serious danger that she rose superior to the terrors of her sex. Idle fears were thrown aside; and the pallid, cadaverous hue of her firmly compressed lips alone shewed how deeply in her heart's core she felt the desertion of him she had been accustomed to reverence and adore. Nothing, save instant flight, could save her; and, when the sun of next day reached his meridian height, he saw us far, far away from the habitation in which we had passed so many days of happiness and peace.

The prudent and the fastidious will blame my gentle Zehlima for this step. Let them do so; they have never had the fear of a cruel death before their eyes, when nothing but in-

stant flight could have saved them. It may chance, too, that they possess not the pure heart, and confiding innocence, of this unsuspecting child of nature. No taint of suspicion ever crossed her mind—no evil imagination ever darkened the uninterrupted purity of her thoughts.

During the two succeeding days, we continued our flight into the depths of that mighty forest. Zehlima spoke little. It was evident that past events had made a deep impression on her mind, and the terror of pursuit was constantly present to her thoughts. From mine, too, it was scarcely ever absent; and often did I start with alarm, when the light footsteps of the graceful antelope sounded on my ear. Ever and anon I took them for the tread of the pursuer; and my heart beat quicker, and my blood ran through my veins with a tingling glow, when, in the agony of the moment, I pictured

my beautiful Zehlima torn from my protecting arms, to be sacrificed to a blood-thirsty and soul-destroying superstition.

But day after day passed away, and no avenging pursuer followed on our steps. Our food was the wild fruits and herbs that grew in luxuriant abundance around—our drink the pure and crystal stream, or, sometimes, the delicious milk of the cocoa nut; and at night we lay down and slept beneath the bending branches of the champac and cadam trees, on a couch of perfumed grass, softer than the shawls of Thibet or Cashmire. Zehlima lay within my arms, her head resting upon my breast, while mine was pressed against her soft and flowing hair. My arms were entwined around her as if I feared even then to lose her; and often have I gazed upon her exquisitely formed features, and, in her gentle slumbers, heard her soft lips murmur my name, till the tears rushed from my eyes in a full and unre-

strained gush. I cannot explain the feeling which thus vents itself in tears. It is not grief—and there is nothing in the contemplation of a beautiful image, that should bring these emblems of sorrow to the eyes. But they are the evidence of a subdued and overflowing heart; of a heart melted down with a sense of its own comparative unworthiness, when gazing upon that which is so innocent and good.

For many days we continued thus to journey forward, till, with a newly awakened feeling of alarm, I beheld Zehlima sinking beneath the fatigue of this continued flight. The constant exertion was too much for her tender frame, and the bright and hectic spot of fever already burned upon her pale cheek. The few past days had been a new world to her, the course of whose existence had been like the calm repose of the untroubled stream that rests beneath the endless sunshine of a summer sky. It was the violence of the thunder storm that

bursts upon the astounded traveller who had seen no cloud to warn him of its approach. For awhile he struggles against its fury;—and so did Zehlima against the inroads of sorrow and fatigue. She tried to cheer her drooping spirits, and to support her fainting form. But to me it was evident that the arrow had pierced the heart of the wounded dove. She clasped her wings, it is true, to hide it from the sight; but still it rankled there, far beyond the reach of human skill to remove it.

It was in vain that I sought to conceal my terror and alarm, for on the morning of the tenth day after our unpremeditated flight, Zehlima was unable to move another step. We were then in a beautifully retired spot, far from the outskirts of that extensive forest. Gently swelling eminences surrounded it on every side; a clear and sparkling stream flowed silently through the verdant turf, and the tall palm-trees, and the blooming acacias, and the golden

clusters of the champac flowers, and the glittering plumage of a thousand beauteous birds, made it appear like another paradise upon earth. "Here," I exclaimed, "we shall rest."

Zehlima smiled, and half raising herself from the soft and verdant bank on which she lay reclined, whispered, in her gentle voice, "Oh, yes! for it is indeed a beautiful spot." There was a seriousness in her voice I could not help observing. I imagined other thoughts were passing through her mind than those which her simple words expressed. But I made no remark. She again laid down upon her grassy couch, and I proceeded to erect a slender hut of the smaller branches of the palm-tree, covering them with its fanlike leaves; and, long before the evening closed in, our humble habitation was completed. Within it I spread a couch of the softest leaves and grass, and then raised Zehlima from the ground, and bore her in my arms, and laid her down to repose upon it.

She repaid my care with a sweet and gentle smile, and her soft hand lay resting within mine as I sat down to watch beside her humble couch. But, oh! that hand was hot and burning; and my heart beat with a thousand fears when I felt its feverish pressure, and gazed upon the flushed cheek and brilliant eyes of the nigh unconscious sufferer.

Day and night I watched by her side. I strewed her couch with fresh herbs and flowers. I brought her the choicest fruits I could gather. I cooled her burning brow with water from the pure and sparkling stream. With fond looks and gentle smiles, she repaid my care; but it was too evident the progress of the fever rapidly increased. The hectic flush upon her cheek gave way to a deadly paleness—the burning heat of her hands and brow, to the cold damps of approaching dissolution. I hung over her in an agony of mind not to be described. I wiped away the cold and dewy damps of death,

and she gently pressed the hand that supported her, and smiled sweetly in my face. I gazed upon her; and methought her smile was more like that of a pure angelic being, at peace with the world and her God, than of one who still lived upon this ruined earth.

But why should I dwell upon a scene like this? On the morning of the seventh day she died—and I once more stood *alone*—a broken-hearted and deserted being, in the waste of this wide and dreary world.

I shed no tear, for the fountains of sorrow were dried to their source. I raised the dead body from its place of rest, and laid it upon my knees; and, in the agony of despair, I spoke to it, and when it would not answer, I shrieked aloud, till the woods rang again with the wildness of my screams. Then, at once, I became calm, lest the loudness of *my* grief should disturb the stillness of *her* repose: and I kissed her pale cheek, and her forehead, and her eyes,

and her cold lips; and I pressed the senseless form to my heart, as if, by so doing, I could restore life, and heat, and animation to it, and bring back the pure spirit which had for ever fled. But it remained fearfully passive, and motionless, and still, within my arms;—and then I shook it—violently shook it—to awaken it from that dreadful sleep. It was of no avail; its half-closed eyes remained fixed and still; and they gazed on me with the same cold unmeaning vacancy of look. Oh, God!—how fearfully distinct is the recollection I retain of that unhappy hour.

CHAPTER VIII.

'But stay! he comes—perchance it yet may be
To share her grave!"—

ANON.

How long I remained in this state I cannot tell. I was awoke from the delirium of my dream by the sound of many feet. The avengers were upon me; they had traced our flight, and at this fearful moment arrived to claim all that remained of Zehlima. They raised the dead body from my knees, and I made no resistance. In silence I gazed upon their heartless operations, and passively I allowed them to proceed. They swathed the body in a linen

garment; and they constructed a light bier of the branches of the palasa-tree, and they laid her upon it, and raised it from the ground, and moved away as if they had been totally unconscious of my presence or existence.

In utter absence and desolation of mind, I instinctively arose and followed them; and then one turned round and smote me; but I heeded not his blow, for my heart was with the dead, and the spirit of resistance had passed from me like a summer dream.

Silently I continued to follow; and when they saw their attempts to hinder me were vain, they ceased to persecute me, and passed on in a direction opposite to that which led to Amroŭ's house. Long and weary was our way; and when the shades of evening closed in, they rested in the forest, and laid the dead body of my beautiful Zehlima beneath the bending branches of a palasa-tree. They lay around her on the soft grass, as if her inanimate re-

mains had been an object of their care. But the heartless wretches soon fell into a profound sleep; and then I lightly trode over their prostrate forms, and sat down to gaze, once more, a last, a farewell look, upon those features I had so often seen beaming with the gladness and the joy of an innocent and sinless heart. Oh! how dreadfully motionless and still they now appeared. The moon shone through an opening in the luxuriant foliage above, and one solitary ray fell upon the pale and beautiful features of the dead. Rigid and still, they lay sleeping in their calm repose, and no marble could have been more coldly fair and beautiful. I pressed my lips for the last time upon that pale, pale forehead; and then I sat down and gazed upon the inanimate countenance before me, till the cold grey light of the morning dawned, and awoke the bearers from their sleep. They approached, and rudely pushed me back as they raised their melan-

choly burden from the ground, and again proceeded on their way.

I know not how the impression of this and the following scenes remains so fearfully distinct and clear upon my mind; for they passed before me as a dream. Truly, they were present to my outward eyes; but I could not comprehend their reality, and scarce believed they had existence save in the creation of a distempered fancy.—Alas, alas! they were all but too true.

Before the noon-day sun had attained its heat, we arrived at the place of our destination. It was upon the outskirts of the forest. I saw the habitations of the living scattered far and near before me; and a beautifully transparent stream gently glided through the long valley where these habitations stood.

One of the bearers ran forward to the nearest dwelling, and soon returned with several young

maidens clothed in garbs of the purest white; and then they all proceeded towards the centre of the valley. Many were the youthful matrons, and the maidens, and the priests, who joined the melancholy procession as it moved along, till they came to a spot which appeared to be destined for some sacred purpose. *There* several Brahmins stood; and there the body of my sainted Zehlima was laid upon the earth. A bed of the fragrant cusha grass was prepared, and her remains were raised from the ground and laid upon that bed, with the head turned in the direction of the noon-day sun. The priests, meanwhile, had traced with consecrated lines the spot on which the funeral pile was to be erected. Quantities of fuel were brought, and, lair upon lair, it was piled up before my aching eyes. The oil of the palm-tree was poured over the heap; and it was then hung round with the most blooming flowers, as if in

mockery of that pale and withered rose that was so soon to be laid in the midst of their freshness and beauty.

In the mean time I remained unheeded, unnoticed by all. I had drawn near the spot where Zehlima reposed; and I stood, in moody silence, gazing upon her sainted relics, equally heedless of those around, as they seemed to be of me. The desolation of despair had spread itself over the wasted feelings of my heart. I was *alone*—hopelessly alone in the world; again a wanderer upon earth, and the only being whose love had bound me to existence, dead—dead—and cold—reposing at my feet.

The erection of the pile was completed, and I gazed with fearful curiosity on the farther proceedings of the priests. I was calm—perfectly calm now; for, in the brooding insanity of my mind, I had determined upon the course I should pursue. Alas! I had ceased to remember that, over me, the elements could have no

power;—that I was accursed—a wanderer for ever on the earth! Thus it is that the weight of a present woe, like an overwhelming flood, for the time bears down all that before had stood prominently in view. The loss of Zehlima had sunk upon my heart, and the sense of oppression, created by that loss, had absorbed every other feeling of my mind. We were about to be parted; and I remembered not that death, which alone could reunite us, had no power over me.

The officiating Brahmins approached and raised the remains of Zehlima from the ground. They conveyed them to the pile, and laid them gently on their bed of blooming flowers. Oh! how lovely, how innocent she looked:—they placed a small piece of coral betwixt her pale and half-open lips, as if to contrast their pallid hue, and the ivory whiteness of her teeth, with the glowing brightness of its colour. They adorned her head with a circlet of the purest

gold, and scattered many gems of price through the clusters of her long dark hair. Methought, for one moment, I saw a tinge of the colour and hue of life upon her cheek. Alas! it was but the reflection of the roses scattered so plentifully around. Oh! what a mockery was this! To deck out the pale inanimate corpse with the jewels and the pride of earth! With these she had never been adorned in life; but she had loved and cherished those beautiful flowers which were strewn around, and my heart was glad to see that from them she was not separated in death.

A silken cloth, perfumed with the richest and most fragrant oils, was then thrown over the body, downwards from the neck: the sweet roses of Benares were scattered in multitudes upon it, and Zehlima lay there like a youthful angel reposing on its bed of flowers—a calm smile playing around her mouth, and the beautiful expression of her countenance as yet

scarcely passed away: small chips of sandal wood, saffron, and aloes, were then scattered upon the pile, and the preparations were complete.

During all this time my strained eye-balls had gazed with fearful anxiety upon the scene: but my cold and rigid limbs seemed fettered to the spot whereon I stood; my lips refused their wonted office, and my tongue cleaved, as it were, to the roof of my mouth. Every feeling was wrapped up and absorbed in a painful and intense interest. I saw one approach the pile with a lighted torch within his grasp—I heard him, clearly and distinctly, recite the appointed verse—" Foolish is he who seeks permanence in the human state; unsolid as the stem of the plantain tree, transient as the ocean's foam. When the body returns to its original principles, what room is there for regret? The earth is perishable—the ocean—and all that they contain;—and how shall mor-

tal man not pass away? All that is low must finally perish—all that is elevated must ultimately fall—all that breathes must end in dissolution—and life must end in death."

A cold, cold shudder, like the feeling of approaching dissolution, ran through my veins, and seemed to freeze the warm current of my blood. He who held the torch approached the pile; and long before a distinct conception could be embodied in the mind, the whole was in a blaze. Brightly, fiercely, furiously it burned. I laughed—a long, loud, and bitter laugh. The trembling multitude drew back, and gazed upon me with horror and affright. I bounded forward with the wild cry of a maniac—I sprung from the earth, and, ere the hand of man could prevent me, I was stretched beside my Zehlima in the midst of the blazing pile. I felt no pain—it seemed to me as if I had sunk upon a bed of flowers, and a soft and pleasing glow of heat was all that I expe-

rienced. The last sound I heard was a fearful yell—the last sight I saw was the rushing of many towards the pile. I heard no more—I saw no more—for, ere a single hand could reach me—if, indeed, a single hand had been stretched out to save—I had sunk into a state of utter insensibility, as calmly and quietly as the innocent babe sinks to slumber on its mother's knee.

CHAPTER IX.

"Off with his casque, there;—
And executioner, take you his head."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

I AM not, at this moment, nor can I ever be, aware of the length of time I remained in the state I have alluded to at the conclusion of the previous Chapter. When I recovered my senses, I found myself, not on a funeral pile, but laid upon a couch more soft than eider-down. A covering of the finest cloth of Masulapatam was stretched over me, and the apartment in which I lay was furnished in the

most gorgeous style of Eastern magnificence. Gold and silver, and the precious things of the earth, were there in abundance. The walls were covered with the cloths of Thibet, and the shawls of Cashmere. The window-frames were filled with loose blinds of the bamboo, around which the fragrant roots of the cusha-grass were twisted. A pure stream of water fell with a murmuring sound over these roots, and the hot and sultry air passing through them was rendered cool and fragrant before it reached the interior of the apartment.

I gazed around me with astonishment, and fancied all I beheld was but a dream. I closed my eyes—but again, when I opened them, the same objects were presented to my view. I could not understand it; but the memory of the past soon came crowding thickly upon my mind, and I remembered all that I had lost. I groaned in utter agony of mind, while I smote my forehead with my clenched hand,

and exclaimed aloud, "Shall I never—never cease to be!" I buried my head in the pillows by which I was surrounded, as if, by excluding the light of day, I could also exclude the bitter thoughts that pressed upon my mind. But the attempt was vain—I rolled from side to side, exclaiming, "Shall I never die—shall I never die!"—till a voice beside me exclaimed, "Death respects none—all must die—but, Oh! infatuated man, seek repentance ere that hour shall come!"

I started; and, looking round, beheld Amrou standing in silent dignity before me. His features were calm and composed, as they had ever been;—but I could not endure the sight of the cruel man who would so recklessly have doomed his only child to death. I turned from him, and motioned him to be gone.—He only moved so far as to seat himself at the foot of the couch on which I lay.—I could not spurn him from me, for he was the father of

my Zehlima; but I half raised myself from the reclining position in which I lay, and fixed my glazed and hollow eyes on his cold impenetrable countenance.—There was no change on his features; but the agonizing sorrow of the few last days had wrought a fearful devastation upon mine. This, however, he seemed not to observe; for he resumed his discourse in the same unmoved tone and manner which characterised his every word and action.—"Yes! seek repentance, if it may be that your crime can admit of pardon.—Go—and for forty days seat thyself beneath the burning sun, surrounded by the five purifying fires, till the enormity of thy guilt has been removed; restrain thy evil passions, and, with thy mind fixed on one object alone, sit in the exercise of devotion for the purification of thy soul."

"*My* guilt!" I exclaimed, while I laughed aloud, and pointed my outstretched hand and finger at his face. For a moment he seemed

alarmed, for my look and my laugh were the look and the laugh of a maniac: but the feeling, if it ever was present, passed away like the shadow of an April cloud.

"Yours," he said, "yes, yours.—Unhappy man, learn to know the enormity of your guilt by the extent of the punishment attached to its commission. Wise are the laws of Menŭ, which proportion the punishment to the offender's guilt.—In these ordinances it is written, 'If a man steal a woman of superior caste, the magistrate shall cause him to be stretched out upon a plate of hot iron, and, having bound the grass beena around his body, shall burn him in the fire.'"

It may easily be conceived that, to me the prospect of such a punishment was attended with no terror. No—no!—if by this means the principle of life within me could have been extinguished or consumed, full gladly would I have resigned me to my fate.—But

this could never be—I knew it could not be; and in derision and in scorn I laughed at what I then conceived to be his empty threats.

But they were not meant as such—for he immediately continued—" And yet, know, that the administration of these sacred laws may be tempered with mercy—and to thee, unworthy as thou art, this mercy has been extended."

I could not comprehend his meaning. I well knew that no such mercy would be extended to me till I had undergone such expiatory penances as would prove ten times more cruel and insufferable than death itself. But I was weary of the scene—I had nothing more to attach me to life—still less to attach me to the impious observances of the Hindoo religion. Once more I experienced that utter desolation of mind which I had so often felt before, and which, whenever a solitary gleam of sunshine came to gladden the waste of my

long existence, I had as often ceased to remember, and cast behind me in the shade.

I motioned Amroü with impatient gesture to leave me and begone. I turned from him, and buried my face deep in my hands, for I could no longer look upon him. Inwardly I laughed at his promises of mercy, for they were as nought to me.—It seemed as if the grovelling worm of earth had held out offers of safety and protection to the lion of the forest, and I revelled in the bitter thought, that upstart vanity and folly were the characteristics of the human race.—"What," I asked myself, "has given this man power to dictate to me, who am so infinitely his superior?—He knows not—he *never* can know who I am.—One single word from my lips would lay him like a reptile in the dust, trembling and aghast; and yet he now lords it over me, in the very ignorance of his heart, as if I were a creature of this earth, and fashioned like

himself."—"Begone!" I exclaimed aloud, as I raised myself upon my couch, and with frantic violence dashed the rich covering far away, "begone! wretch, nor tempt me to add another murder to weigh down my soul to everlasting death;—begone! and leave me to my fate!"

My appearance must have been appalling; but Amroü moved not. No change in his countenance betrayed a shade of feeling in his heart. His calmness provoked me beyond the power of language to describe, and I have often since wondered that I did not smite him to the death upon the spot. I foamed at the mouth—I clenched my hands and shook them in his face. I called him parricide—and murderer;—but he only replied with a look of cold contempt. I screamed—I yelled with fury—and would have dashed him to the earth, but an expression so like that of my sainted Zehlima passed over his countenance at the mo-

ment, that I[redacted] back—still, calm, and quiet, as an innocen[redacted] and helpless child.

But this was only the feeling of a moment. My eyes were rivetted on his face; and, almost instantaneously, methought I saw a smile of compassion for my fancied folly beam upon his features. To me that smile gave them the expression of a demon, and in the madness of the moment, while I turned shuddering from their look, I fiercely ordered him to begone for ever—and spurned him from me with my foot. He arose—but not to leave the room.—I looked at him—and, for the first time in my life, I saw the expression of earthly anger upon his face. His eyes flashed with more than their wonted light—his pale forehead and his cheeks were flushed with a crimson hue. Yet these indications were passing—passing as the last gleam of sunshine that rests upon the cold surface of a field of snow. In an instant they were gone, and he stood

before me as calm and collected as he had ever been. "If a man," he exclaimed, "says the ordinance of Menû, strike a Brahmin with his hand, the magistrate shall cut off that man's hand; if he strike him with the foot, the magistrate shall cut off that foot." Thrice he clapped his hands together, and I heard the sound of approaching feet. I sprung towards him with the fury of a maniac, intending to grapple his throat, but ere I could reach him my arms were pinioned to my sides, I was seized by many hands, and at a given signal hurried to the darkness and desolation of a dungeon.

For many days I lay—bound and fettered—in the loathsome place. Darkness brooded around, and the only means afforded me to mark the lapse of time was the regular visits of the wretched being who brought my scanty allowance of parched rice, and the sparingly dealt out portion of water meant to allay the

burning agony of my thirst. Oh! what wretched hours were these.—In the dreary solitude of my dungeon memory was busy with the past.—No external object was there to interfere with the exercise of its sad privilege, and I brooded over the only happy days I had known in the lapse of many long years, like the miser over the remembrance of the gold that has been snatched from beneath his grasp, till the darkness of my mind became tinged with the fearful light of incipient madness, and I called on the name of Zehlima, and shouted aloud till the vaulted roof of my dungeon rang again with the bitterness of my cries.

It was thus with me when the door of my dungeon was one day thrown open at what appeared to be an unusual hour, and one, whom I had no recollection of having seen before, approached and knocked off the fetters from

my limbs. Even this had an effect upon me, for it was something out of the dull routine that had marked many days of my past existence, and I looked forward to anything of change with a sort of childish and imbecile delight. Alas! how little unhinges the mind of man;—that mind, of the fancied powers and strength of which he is so vain and proud. A passing thought—a common event—the withering grief of a few days—lowers it beneath the level of the instinct of the brute creation; and those actions which were looked upon as the offspring of a bright and beautiful reflection, become neither more nor less than the operations of momentary impulse.

I was led forth into the broad light of day—and I well remember how painfully its dazzling glare struck upon my sight. For a few minutes I felt as one that is blind, and I pressed my hands upon my eyes to shield them from

the effects of that light, which, piercing through their closed lids, burst with pain upon their dazzled orbs.

As I was borne along, I heard the confused murmur of many tongues—and, quietly removing my hands, I ventured to look around, and beheld a great multitude collected near what appeared to be a scaffold, erected on a rising spot of ground. Towards it I was rapidly hurried; and ere many minutes had elapsed, I stood upon that gentle eminence, in the centre of the crowd, and on the centre of the scaffold. The implements of death lay before me, but my countenance blanched not with fear, for I knew that sooner would the iron edge of the weapon turn, and crumble like a piece of dried bark, than raze the slightest speck on the surface of my skin. Yet, had it been otherwise, and had that instrument been winged with death, what could it be to me? Death and I had long been as brothers, and

he had ceased to have any terrors for a wretch whose whole existence was a burden he vainly sought to be rid of.

Calm and unmoved, therefore, did I contemplate this fearful scene. Not a sound—not a whisper was heard amidst the hundreds of thousands crowding round. My legs and my arms were bound, and I was stretched at full length with my head upon the block.—The grim executioner approached, and raised his weapon in the air—I looked on him with unmoved eye, and shouted with wild unearthly laughter in his face. Fearfully that laughter sounded over the death-like silence of a spot where so many living beings stood.—"Hamakoo! Hamakoo!"* was shouted from a thou-

* The inhabitants of Eastern countries will not injure one they conceive to be inflicted with mental derangement. It is looked upon as the visitation of God. He is dee[illegible] a prophet, and treated with affection and respect.

sand voices. The weapon of the executioner dropt harmless at his feet. The slavish wretch knelt before me with every sign of terror and remorse; he untied the withs wherewith my hands and feet were bound; I stood for one moment upon the scaffold—then, as if borne upon the wings of the whirlwind, I sprung from its height, and, darting forward, passed through the dense crowd, which opened on every side around, bowing to the dust before me with every mark of mingled terror and respect.

I heeded not the adulation of those who could so willingly have seen me done to the death, but hurried forward in my wild career with as much speed as my feeble and emaciated state would permit. It was not long, however, before my trembling limbs ceased to serve me, and gladly I rushed into the open door of the first habitation that presented itself to my view. I called aloud for water, and

water was brought to me.—I plunged my head into the vessel, and drank like a beast of the field, for my eyeballs were starting from their sockets, my lips and throat were parched and dry, and my whole frame was suffering the torment of an agonizing and excruciating thirst.

When I had nearly emptied the vessel, I raised my head and looked around.—But I saw nothing distinctly;—a strange mist hung before my eyes, and a raging fever burned within my veins. I was carried to an inner apartment, and laid upon a couch of dried grass—but memory had passed away, and I have no recollection of the events which occurred during the lapse of many a long and sunless day.

The first distinct perception which I can now recall to remembrance, was the exquisite, but childish feeling of delight I experienced when allowed to emerge from the dark con-

fined atmosphere of my hovel to the fresh balmy air, and cheerful light of day. Oh! how I enjoyed the cool refreshing breeze of evening as it played around my brow—how I loved to gaze upon the bright sun as he sunk slowly to his rest, in one unclouded blaze of living light. Those who have been long the victims of a feverish wasting illness, can tell the delight experienced when the hour of convalescence comes.

But I have talked of instinct in contra-distinction to the exercise of the mental faculties of man; and mine, at present, was the enjoyment of instinct, for the brighter faculties of reason and of memory were gone. All was one dark — confused — inextricable mass within. I had lost every sense of my wretched state; and, if happiness can consist in the negative principle of not being conscious of the misery we endure, I was happy in wandering from house to house,

from place to place—devouring food when it was set before me—quenching my thirst at the river's brink—and at night reposing wherever I could find a spot to rest my weary limbs.

CHAPTER X.

"One clear idea, wakened in the breast
By Memory's magic, lets in all the rest."
MOORE.

I WANDERED in this unsettled state of mind for many days; how many, I cannot exactly tell, but I well remember the hour when the first glimmerings of returning reason dawned upon the dreary night which had so long enveloped my mind in its cloudy folds of darkness and despair.

The period of many an ordinary life-time, even when life is lengthened out to its full

term of threescore years and ten, had passed, when, early one morning I stood, a lonely and a solitary being, upon a level spot of ground. The thick dense mist which hung around, prevented my descrying any object even at the shortest distance; but as the morning advanced, and the sun acquired additional heat, the mist gradually cleared away, and disclosed many things which were familiar to my sight. One solitary pillar, in particular, I recollected to have seen before. The associations connected with that pillar struck like lightning on my mind;—a ray of thought pierced its darkness; reason was restored, and a thousand recollections, and the whole history of the past at once crowded in busy succession to its view.—So true is it, that the veriest trifle will sometimes serve to re-unite the broken links in the chain of memory!

A fearful and a solemn stillness reigned around; fearful, indeed, to me who remem-

bered to have seen the busy mart and crowded cities there. Towers and palaces had been where all was silence and desolation now. The voice of man had echoed through the long streets.—Gaily attired damsels, in tinkly ornaments, had trode through them in their pride —and riotous luxury had reigned—and thousands laughed and shouted where no living being now appeared.

The general face of the country, indeed, was unchanged; — but where were these crowded cities and their inhabitants? I looked around.—Nothing but a dark, cold, and dismal lake met my view,—and I sat down upon the borders of the Dead Sea, to contemplate the solemn wildness of the scene.

High, bleak, and barren mountains reared their heads before me, and at their base, like a dark and solitary tarn, lay that huge and silent lake. The wind blew, but there was no ripple on its wave.—Its black and sluggish

waters rolled heavily along, and they formed a fearful contrast to the crumbling whiteness of the mouldering soil around.—No symptom of vegetation appeared within the scope of many miles. No living animal, not even the meanest of the reptile race, crawled upon the borders of that accursed lake. Bleak, barren, desolate rocks alone diversified its melancholy aspect.—Huge masses of moving sand alone appeared to have a principle of life within its dreary influence.

"Just God!" I exclaimed, "how fearful is thy wrath—how righteous are thy judgments! Here, Sodom and Gomorrah, Adinah, Zeboim, and Bala, stood—cities of a thousand halls—crowded with the youthful and the gay. But, alas! where are they? Those cities are buried a hundred fathoms deep beneath yon cold and chilly wave. The brightness and the beauty of youth that smiled within their palaces have perished too; aye—perished

when their thoughtless mirth and levity were at the loudest and the highest pitch. Silence and desolation have their empire here,—the cry of the beast of prey is unheard; every symptom of vegetation has disappeared, and nothing but a long, wide, barren, trackless waste of sand now lies where flourishing cities, with their smiling fields and gardens, stood. Astonishment and death have indeed been here—destruction, like a whirlwind, has come —and like the ruined earth when that whirlwind has passed, all lies in cold—still—motionless dismay around.

I paused—for while I spoke, and gazed unconsciously upon those dreary waters, a shadow lay upon their surface for a moment's space, and then moved silently along.—I looked on high, and far above me I saw an eagle floating in the air, and the slanting beams of the morning sun threw the shadow of the proud bird upon the waters as he moved slowly on

his way, rejoicing in his strength. I kept my eye fixed upon him, and I saw him first bend his keen gaze upon the earth below, then look upon the blue heavens above, and again turn his head from side to side, as if the unbounded infinity of space were all his own. I could not help envying the bird, which thus soared on high, glorying in his strength; and a sense of my own unworthiness—of my own lost condition—stole insensibly upon my soul. But while I gazed upon that proud bird he came insensibly within the influence of the pestilential vapours which arose from the accursed sea—his far-spread wings quivered like an aspen leaf—his drooping head shewed that strength and energy were past—the hand of death was upon him, and, as if struck by an arrow to the heart, down—down he fell—lifeless—motionless—upon the bosom of the wave.

Alas! what a curse lay upon this unhappy

land—how fearful was its doom—how severely had the hand of Almighty vengeance smote it, and how solemn were the monuments of that vengeance which still remained around. When the hand of man completes its devastating work of cruelty, a thousand shattered remnants tell that the puny efforts of mortal power alone have been employed. Of the far-spread mansions which were once crowded with myriads of living beings, many a broken pillar, and many a scattered stone remain to tell where once a city stood;—many a blackened corpse, and many a bone whitening in the sun, to tell where the gay and light of heart once moved, unconscious of their coming fate. Beasts of prey prowl around, and the famished vulture soars above. The melancholy cry of the jackall, the fearful howling of the wolf are heard. The speckled serpent draws his slimy folds along, and the wary tra-

veller approaches, armed, to resist the attacks he may meet in those regions of danger and destruction. But when the hand of the Almighty, in the execution of his just vengeance, takes upon it this task of devastation, what remains to tell that His work is incomplete? Of crowded cities not one stone is left upon another, to say that "here a habitation stood." Of the myriads of living beings that once animated their palaces and halls, no corrupted flesh—no mouldering bone is seen—the beasts of prey flee from the scene of desolation and death. The melancholy cry of the jackall, and the fearful howling of the wolf, are not heard there; the crawling serpent of the dust avoids the cold accursed soil, and the chance traveller, when he passes, looks upon a scene of solemn and fearful stillness that awakens in his heart deep serious reflections of an awfully overwhelming power; but leaves no room for the thought that danger arising from the hand

or purpose of a human being can ever exist, or inhabit there again.

My throat felt parched and dry, but the bitter waters of that dark lake could not assuage its thirst. I arose, and with a hopeless heart turned from its melancholy borders to seek a purer stream, but nothing, save a far-spread desert of white and crumbling sand, lay within my view. I raised my hand to shade my aching eyes from the brilliant glare of the noon-day sun, while I looked around to see, if perchance, I might descry some fountain in the desert.

For long, nothing met my ardent gaze—till, at length, a faint and distant glimmering on the far borders of the waste seemed to tell that the wished-for aid was there. In haste I girded up my loins and proceeded on my way, and as that bright glimmering increased I thought it could not be the deceiving light which so often leads the unwary traveller

astray, and leaves him to perish on the barren sand, cursing the hour when he mistook its glittering haze for a cool refreshing stream.

Under this impression my sinking heart revived within me, and stoutly I proceeded forward, bending my footsteps across the sands of the desert. But as the mirage disappears from the view of the approaching traveller, so the appearance of water soon vanished away from mine. Where I had fancied the refreshing stream to be, high clouds of sand and dust arose, and through these clouds, as the light wind ever and anon opened and dispersed their thickness, the glancing of a thousand spears and swords shone upon my astonished sight, the trampling of a thousand steeds echoed o'er the waste, and wild bursts of martial music struck upon my ear.

The stillness of the desert was gone—and it seemed to me as if the proud Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his chariots, were again

advancing to the waters of the Red Sea. In silence I gazed upon the numerous and well-appointed band as it approached the place where I stood. The keen and piercing eye of their leader saw a stranger in his path ; he waved his bright sword on high, and in one instant that mighty host stood motionless and still. Inwardly I laughed to think how the presence of a puny worm of earth could effect this sudden change, as it were, from life to death ; but perceiving the eye of that proud leader to be fixed on me, I stepped forward, and stood in his presence, and fixed a look on him well nigh as proud and haughty as his own. He was a man of tall stature and athletic form—his countenance of a bold and haughty bearing—his eyes full of fire—his whole frame vigorous and muscular, and well calculated to undergo the fatigues incident to the profession in which his very appearance betokened he took delight. He was in full

and complete armour, over which, even in that sultry clime, the shaggy skin of an enormous lion was thrown. The golden clasp by which this covering was secured glittered brightly on his right shoulder; his vizor was thrown back, and a quantity of long light hair streamed and curled around the fastenings of his helmet. He rode on a powerful war-horse, at whose saddle bow there hung a mace which no ordinary arm could wield. Over his head a silken standard, fastened to a long and glittering spear, was borne by a knight arrayed in a coat of mail. Its many folds sometimes drooped, and sometimes floated sluggishly in the air, but I could descry three lions emblazoned in its centre,—and then I knew that I stood in the presence of the Lion-hearted King of England.

But amidst all the pomp and circumstance of war, this proud monarch had not issued forth without those who somewhat softened

the harshness of its features. On his right hand his beautiful queen, the young and gentle Berengera, rode. Her light and graceful bearing formed a strange contrast to the massy frame and ponderous bulk of the haughty monarch. Her dark brown hair clustered in many a glossy ringlet around a fair and open brow. Her hazel eyes shone with a sweetness of expression that spoke of gentleness itself. Ever and anon they were turned upon her liege lord, and when she looked on him, and caught the glance of his bright eye occasionally fixed on her, her glowing cheek, and parted lips, disclosing teeth of a pearly whiteness, betokened the inward joy she felt at being an object worthy the attention and the love of so renowned a hero. A little in the rear rode Alice of Anjou, cousin to the lion-hearted king, and again the looks of this resplendent beauty formed a striking contrast to those of the gentle Berengera. Her form

was passing tall, and cast in nature's noblest mould—her thick clustering hair, as black and glossy as the raven's wing, was braided over a proud and haughty forehead; and her dark piercing eyes, and the curl of her upper lip, beautiful as lips and eyes were, betrayed a marked contempt of the passing endearments of the royal pair, and an ill-concealed and ill-controlled impatience, which spoke of a temper that could brook no delay in the accomplishment of its slightest wish. But I dwell too long on these minute descriptions, although I have good reason, even at this distance of time, to remember the looks of one of these three;—aye! even although centuries have passed away since they, and the armed hosts who then stood before me, have all been laid in the silent grave, and I alone remain to tell the tale.

I have said that I stood before the King, and confronted his keen gaze with a look as

haughty as his own. My arms were folded on my breast, and in silence I waited his enquiries. At length he spoke, and he questioned me as to my knowledge of the trackless desert waste on which we had met; of the surrounding country, of Jerusalem, and the Holy Sepulchre. I answered him fully, freely, for I had no reason to conceal anything I knew. The surrounding country was as familiar to me as the limited spot of his birth is to the hungry peasant, who, from it alone, acquires the means of his subsistence. For a moment, however, he seemed to doubt the correctness of my information. He shook his head; and I smiled, I believe, with a sort of cold contempt, when I saw that even this mighty conqueror had no idea of a human being possessing more knowledge than the short space of an ordinary life-time could bestow. The haughty Alice saw that smile; and it appeared to me as if her eye lighted up

in the consciousness of having met a spirit kindred to her own.

"My life upon the stranger's truth," she exclaimed, while she clenched her hand and raised herself erect upon her saddle, and looked around her, as if to pierce with the lightning glance of her eye whoever should gainsay the assertion she had made. "My life upon his truth: take him, royal Richard, for your guide; let him assume the cross, and bear arms in this noble cause, and be assured he will prove no mean succour in rescuing the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel's hand."

"Beshrew thee, Cousin," said Richard, laughing, "but thou art a good councillor; and there is sense in what thou hast spoken, had a hundred women said it. The stranger will do a good service to the army of the Lord, were he but to guide it through this infernal desert, where our worthy cousin, Philip of Anjou,—curses on his name!—has left

us to toil unaided and alone. What say you, my Berengera? He is of noble bearing, too, and may, perchance, do the service of a goodly knight."

These were the words of the King: but I need not enter into the detail of a conversation in which I took little part. It sounded indeed upon my ear; but its import was as little heeded as the wind that passeth by, while no one can tell from whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. Suffice it to say that I joined that host; and, clad in armour, to preserve a life, against which every mortal weapon must have been directed in vain, rode by the side of the lion-hearted King, and in the company of the haughty Alice, mounted on a steed that might have carried royalty itself to the bloody field of war.

Once again I was in the busy haunts of men; and, after the silence and desolation of many years, I was again surrounded by a

crowd of living beings. Now, for the first time, I heard of these wars, the note of preparation for which had so long rung throughout every corner of the civilized world—of these wars which had been commenced at the preaching of a hot-brained and distempered zealot, and had already despoiled the fairest states, and most smiling lands, of Europe of their best and bravest knights; and turned one half of the East into a huge charnel house, where their smouldering bones lay whitening in the sun. In the name of an humble and a lowly Saviour they had been undertaken; but they had deluged the earth with the blood of myriads of the human race, and left the voice of many a bereaved widow and fatherless child to ascend before the throne of God, as a testimony against that fanatic madness with which the Christian world was filled.

Crowds upon crowds had issued forth—thousands upon thousands had perished; and

thousands upon thousands rushed forth to perish still. Like devouring crowds of locusts, they had come upon the lands. At first, an undisciplined, tumultuous, and ill-assorted mob, led by fanatical fools and visionary priests, trusting that it was *they* who should redeem Israel, appeared as the chosen army of the Lord: but anon, well-appointed hosts—the flower of the chivalry of the west, and led by the first and best of warriors of the day—came on. To redeem Jerusalem—to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the hand of the Infidel—was their object; as if he, who said "Let there be light," and there was light, would not, in his own good time, have fulfilled his word, and restored its own to Israel.

Their conduct, too, had been worthy of the object they had in view: one after another these various armaments had pressed forward like so many madmen and so many fools, leaving unconquered provinces and unsub-

dued cities behind, trusting to the vain and empty promise of the Infidel, that if Jerusalem surrendered, they, too, would deliver up their keys. But, as might have been foreseen, ere long they reaped the fruits of the folly they had sown: Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Infidel; and around its proud walls thousands upon thousands had lain, strewn like the sand upon the desert, cold—lifeless—dead—while a small remnant alone had been left to retrace its miserable way through a hostile and unsubdued land, broken and worn down in heart and strength alike.

Such had been the fate of the previous adventurers in this holy strife: but *now* the lion-hearted King of England had assumed the cross;—aroused by the tale of the sufferings of their brethren in the East, the Princes of the West had crowded around his victorious standard; and, at the head of three hundred thousand warriors, he approached the Holy City,

at that time defended by the no less illustrious Saladin, Emperor of the East.

One of this numerous train I now moved, for to me all situations were alike. Yet it was with a heavy heart, and an ill-foreboding mind, I joined the host; for, even under the guidance of the victorious Richard, I could not look upon these myriads of the human race, as doing aught else but moving forward to a sure destruction and a bloody death.

My tale, however, rests not with the many, nor with the political history of past events. A narrower sphere is mine. During our progress to the Holy City, I perceived the eyes of the proud Alice, more than once, bent on me with a peculiarity of expression which could scarcely be mistaken. But, Oh! how different was that expression from the gentle, winning softness of Zehlima! The contrast smote me to the heart; and as often as I saw these looks, which seemed like the smothered

brightness of the lightning's glance, bent on me, I turned with a feeling of heart-breaking sadness from their gaze.

I know not, but in a breast like that of Alice, this conduct, like oil thrown upon a flame, was only calculated to awaken a brighter blaze. Obstacles to her were as nothing: whatever their nature might be, they were looked upon as things which could easily be surmounted; and I verily believe that the more obstructions she met with in the pursuit of any fancy of the moment, the more ardent she became in that pursuit, the more determined to attain her point.

I will not be accused of vanity, when I say that I moved with as knightly a bearing as the best and bravest of that numerous host. Every earthly feeling had now been dead for long within my breast; but at the period of which I now write, the knowledge of what I was—of what my own accursed fate had made

me—of the vast superiority I possessed over those surrounding beings of a day, gave an unconscious dignity to every look and movement, which could not fail to make its impress upon a mind formed as that of Alice was. Past events, too, had left the impression of a deep and serious melancholy upon my countenance; a cast of thought, that ever wins its way, by some unknown passage, to a woman's heart. But, in my heart, love—and all that could boast relation to it, as I then deemed—was for ever dead.

The progress of the moving mass by which we were surrounded was necessarily slow, and our stages very short. But, as the evening approached, our tents were pitched, and the night was passed in mirth and melody, and in the songs of the numerous troubadours and minstrels who were followers of the nobles of that vast array. On these occasions Alice was ever by my side: her white hand rested

upon my arm, and I alone could lead her through the bewildering maze of crowded tents.

In like manner, during the many desultory excursions made by the leaders of our host, during the creeping progress of the main body, if I turned around, Alice, on her light palfrey, was within my sight; if, in pursuit of game, I darted through the forest, she was at my side; if I sought to fly from myself and thought, like my shadow she was with me. It was in vain that I turned away; she would bend her bright eyes upon mine, as if she would have searched my soul, to discover all that lay hid within its innermost and deep recess. She would ask me the cause of the serious melancholy that hung upon my brow, and well nigh quenched the light of eyes that once were bright and sparkling as her own. She would press me to say if it had always been so with me; and when I answered that

I had nothing in common with aught in this world, and that mine was a sad and solitary fate, she would regard me with one of her proudest looks, and exhort me to be more of a warrior and a man.

In these moments I could not help contrasting her with my well remembered gentle Zehlima. How little did either know me, yet how different was their conduct. When sadness and sorrow stole upon my heart, and the dark retrospect of past crimes arose like an upbraiding spirit to my view, Zehlima was there with her own feminine softness, her own gentle kindness, to soothe the outcryings of a troubled conscience, and point the way to a more lasting and a better rest. Oh! there is no balm to a wounded spirit, like the kindness of a loved and a loving one. But Alice! —what shall I say of her? With those short-sighted views which belong to beings of this world alone, she exhorted me to seek a for-

getfulness of sorrow in the toils and troubles of a warrior's life, and the danger of a warrior's deeds. These, it is true, might have buried in forgetfulness the workings of a common mind, and satisfied the daring of a common spirit; for the glory of a passing moment, the vain splendour of an empty pageant, is all that such desire. But to me they were as nothing—yea, less than nothing, and vanity—they could not satisfy my troubled spirit—they could not bring it one moment's rest, or teach it to forget one sorrow that weighed so heavily on the lightness of its thought.

Had I confessed to Alice my utter carelessness of worldly glory—my total contempt of all she deemed so bright and pure—and convinced her that such feelings could live within a knightly breast, I believe she would have despised and spurned me as a being of a recreant race. But I could not bring myself to this—and I still lived and moved in her pre-

sence, clothed in the false splendour of a borrowed light.

It was on one of our hunting excursions, that the splendour of this borrowed light was increased to a dazzling brightness in her eyes. In these excursions I sometimes took a melancholy pleasure—for the wild country, although of a different and more varied character, reminded me of many a past and happy hour. When I could do it unobserved, I was wont to separate from my gay companions, and wander alone through the depths of the wilderness, occupied with the vain employment of delineating, on memory's tablet, the brightest pictures of the past.

During one of these wanderings, when, in utter thoughtlessness of mind, I had strayed farther than I dreamt of, I was roused from the deep reverie into which I had fallen, and the beautiful dreams of my fancy were dissipated, by a loud and hideous roar, so fearfully

agonizing—so frightfully terrible—so unlike anything I had ever heard, that my heart quailed within me, and I looked around in terror to descry the cause.

For a moment all was still and silent as the grave—and, to me, that silence was even more fearfully terrible than the wildness of the cry which had preceded it. But again the cry resounded through the wilderness, and unable longer to bear the agony of suspense, I darted forward, with a feeling approaching to the madness of despair. With freezing horror I beheld an enormous shaggy lion in my path. He was, however, beyond the power of harming me; for around his powerful frame a huge serpent had twisted its speckled folds, and even then was on the point of grappling the noble animal by the throat. Without a moment's hesitation, or even thinking of the danger I incurred, I rushed forward, and with one blow of my trusty sword, severed the venomous

reptile's head from its body. Its slimy folds relaxed their grasp, its quivering frame drooped towards its native earth, and the monarch of the waste, shaking off the dead remains of his mortal foe, erected his proud mane, and, with a glancing eye, stood free and unfettered in my sight. It was then I first thought of the danger I had incurred. My life, I knew, he could not harm, but he might have torn and lacerated a weary frame; and I stood in the silent expectation of his springing, on the instant, with unrestrained violence, towards me. Such, at least, would have been the conduct of many of the human race. They would have turned against their benefactor—they would have risen to smite him—and, if they could, would have trodden him in the dust beneath their feet. But what was my surprise when the noble animal cowered before me, and, drawing near, licked my hand and caressed me, as if sensible of the danger from which he had been freed.

It was at this moment, while I stood with my hand upon his mane, that my gay companions, and, among them, the proud and beauteous Alice approached. My noble lion shewed no symptom either of hostility or fear. The human form seemed already to have become familiar to his sight, and he gazed on it as he would have done on an object he had ever been accustomed to behold. But they possessed not this noble and confiding spirit, for they drew back with instinctive fear till I had recounted my adventure, and shewn them the dead body of the huge envenomed monster, coiled beneath my feet.

While I spoke, tears, the first I had ever seen bedew her cheek, rushed from the eyes of the haughty Alice. With a more than usually softened look she approached, and clasping my mailed hand within her own, raised her dark eyes to heaven, and poured forth a fervent thanksgiving for my safety. I could not but

feel grateful for the kindness and affection she thus displayed. The feelings of her soul glanced forth in the brightness of her looks; and I saw that this deed, which was but the effect of a momentary impulse on my part, had raised me still higher in her esteem, and, to all appearance, sealed the progress of a lasting affection. But my heart was seared and dead. I turned my head aside, under the influence of feelings I could ill describe, and buried it deep in the shaggy mane of my new ally. I could scarce repress my sobs—and seeing me thus agitated, the gay cavalcade moved silently forward on its way. Alice took my hand to lead me after it. She pressed it to her heart. I followed her a few steps, and then turned to take a farewell glance of my noble and grateful animal. But he was at my side. He would not leave me. I had preserved his life, and he seemed to think that life was no more his own. He followed me to crowded camps, and from

that hour, till a change came over the waste of my existence, the grateful animal never for a moment left my side, or forsook the friend to whom he had thus become so suddenly and so warmly attached.*

It may well be conceived that our appearance, thus attended, created no small astonishment in the minds of many of our numerous host. But my attendant had become gentle and docile as a lamb. Even the timid—the lovely Berengera felt no fear in caressing him; and as for Alice, she ministered to his wants with more attention than the most attached of his slaves could have bestowed upon the person of an eastern monarch.

* An occurrence similar to that attempted to be described, actually took place during one of the Crusades.

CHAPTER XI.

"Oh God! oh God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world."

SHAKSPEARE.

BUT our present life of comparative indulgence and ease was not to last for ever. We proceeded on our way, and as we approached the territories of the sacred city, green forests and cultivated tracts were left behind. Every mark of vegetation disappeared. *This* desolation, however, was not the effect of retributive vengeance, but of the despoiling hand of rapine and war. A cruel but an able policy had dictated the best course to ensure the co-operation of famine and distress in thinning

the ranks of the infatuated invaders; and burning hamlets—and ruined towns—and smoking villages—and trodden-down fields—and choked fountains—on every side, told how well the great Saladin had profited by its lessons.

We had besides, through the long and weary way that still lay before us, ere we reached the object of our destination, many a toil, and many a danger to encounter. For, in addition to the desolated state of the country through which we now passed, as if hunger and thirst alone had not been sufficient for human strength to cope with, we were constantly assailed by hordes of those light and predatory bands who came and went like the sand of the desert—at one moment hovering nigh, a thick and dense cloud ready to burst on our devoted heads; and at the next, dispersed and flying, till scarce a trace of them remained.

In addition to these many ills, the burning heat of summer had contributed to parch the whole earth, and to dry up those springs and streams which were wont to water the valleys; and accordingly, while the sun glared, day by day, in fierce unclouded brightness, the camp resounded with supplications for rain. But these supplications were unheeded; no cloud appeared upon the horizon—the sky shone ever with the same unchanging blue, and our sole exertions were, of necessity, bent to searching for and procuring water wherever it could be found. Parties were formed to discover the precious liquid, and loud were the demonstrations of joy when even the smallest quantity, and of the most polluted quality, could be procured. Carefully was it dealt out in miserable portions: but, alas! these only aggravated the thirst they were meant to quench, and many a panting wretch sunk exhausted, and died upon the burning

earth, ere his slender portion conld be conveyed to his parched lips.

Famine and disease now rapidly thinned the numbers of our host—yet those who remained, worn out and exhausted as they were, pressed on, animated by a wild enthusiasm that nothing could overcome. The recovery of the Holy Sepulchre was the ardent desire of heart and soul, and to attain this darling object, hunger and thirst, famine and toil, were set at nought by many a perishing wretch who resisted all, in the firm belief that if he could but once see the towers of the Holy City, and perish within their view, his salvation through eternity was secured. And well was this ardent, enthusiastic spirit fostered by the leaders of the host. They bore every deprivation—they shared every danger to which the meanest of their followers was exposed—I have seen the gentle Berengera pass the untasted cup from her own parched lips, to hand

it to a dying soldier of the Cross. And the proud Alice, although her eye had lost somewhat of its brightness, and her cheek was of a paler hue, and her form of a less high and haughty bearing, submitted without a murmur to the most trying deprivations, and ever was the first to set the example of self-denial to the host. High-toned heroism was the characteristic of her mind—and her example indeed did more than words can tell; for none who bore within his breast even the last dying spark of manhood's qualities would willingly submit to be outdone by a woman.

Alice, thus, almost imperceptibly, led many to imitate her conduct, and thus, unconsciously, sustained their fainting spirits. In the search for water she ever was the first—she pressed on with a noble and devoted courage, and a contempt of all difficulties that many a time led her into personal hazard. No remonstrance could check her daring spirit—the danger to

be apprehended from those flying hordes who continually hung upon and harassed our march, she laughed at and despised; and I verily believe the proud spirit within her would indignantly have rebelled, had she known the care that was taken to protect her from their incursions.

This care, however, did not always prove effectual. It was on our return from one of these excursions that Alice was no where to be seen. She had last been observed, as if wrapt in thought, pursuing her solitary way at a distance from the main body.

I had no love for Alice,—nor could I feel love for a human being now, but I could not help experiencing a strong degree of interest in one who had shewn so much regard towards me. He must, indeed, be dead in heart and soul who feels no kindness towards one who, perchance, has made him the chief object of her esteem and reverence. Besides, every dictate of duty

—every feeling of humanity—forbade that one so noble should be left to perish unaided and alone.

Without a moment's consideration, therefore, I darted forward in the direction pointed out as that in which Alice had last appeared. No one attempted to follow me, for, however much the general spirit of enthusiasm, kept awake by the great object of the expedition, might still exist within our camp, the knightly desire of solitary adventure had departed, and fallen, as it were, dead, before those common hardships all had to undergo alike.

With headlong speed I pursued my lonely way, till I reached a wild and dreary spot, near which I remembered I had been in the morning. Hills rose upon hills—rocks were hurled upon rocks—and so great was the variegated nature of the scenery, that every new step presented some new feature, and at no part could the traveller see above a

hundred paces from the spot on which he stood.

At one point in this deserted place many half-beaten mountain tracks joined, and when I reached this point I paused, bewildered, and undetermined which of the diverse paths to pursue. While I stood hesitating and uncertain, a shrill cry of a peculiar nature sounded in my ears. I knew it to be the signal given by a small party of the marauding Arabs who infest this country, when seeking to rejoin the horde from which it had been separated; and darting up the steep and rocky ascent, in the direction from which the sound had issued, I quickly caught the view of those I sought.

In the centre of a solitary and retired dell, amidst these rocks and hills, I beheld four men mounted upon young and fiery Arab steeds. With gay plumes and bandellettes these noble steeds were adorned, but the only clothing of

their riders were large and loose mantles, and sandals of undressed hide. In the hand of each, was a long and well strung bow, at his side a sword, and at his back a quiver full of arrows, that the most famed of England's famous archers need not have scorned to use. But there was a fifth steed among them, and on that steed the Lady Alice sat;—calm, composed, haughty, as ever, but pale from the effects of recent fatigue, and the previous exhaustion of her bodily strength.

The moment I appeared in sight, Alice raised her delighted eyes to heaven, and uttered a loud cry of joy. I darted forward, and my proud steed seemed to have recognized the Lady Alice as soon as I had done; for, as if forgetting all the fatigue he had previously endured, he appeared to be invigorated with a new life, and spurned the dry and arid sand far behind him in his fleet career. During my approach, the robbers were not idle, for,

long ere I could reach the spot where they stood, four glancing arrows had struck upon my breast. They might as well have struck against a tower of steel! Swift as lightning, they had come—strong as a thunderbolt, they had been directed to my heart—but they rebounded, shattered and broken, from my armour of proof, and fell harmless to the ground.

Before another flight could reach me, I had darted at the nearest of the four. I drew my sword and struck at him, but his well-trained steed swerved aside, and the keen steel whistled through the empty air. In less than a moment's time I was attacked before, behind, and on either side. But I knew the nature of their warfare, and by one swift and sudden back stroke I laid the foremost of the assailants lifeless at my feet. Quick as thought, I checked my powerful steed, and, turning him round, the second of my opponents was

disabled from the conflict. I laughed aloud, and pointed my finger in scorn at the remaining two, who, astonished at the sudden fate of their companions, paused for a moment's space, to regard the scene.

Exasperated at my gestures of defiance and scorn, they again came forward, raging like the wild beasts of the forest, to renew the combat. But, excepting for the Lady Alice, I cared not for a horde of such. Yet these were brave men, and well did they maintain their ground. They struck at me with powerful arms, and with shining blades that might have sheared asunder treble bars of brass and steel. On me, however, their blows fell unheeded, and their swords glanced from my armour, leaving scarce a mark behind, to shew where they had struck. With the rapidity of lightning they flew from side to side; they changed their attacks, and by turns attempted every manœuvre of their predatory warfare.

Before—behind—on the right—on the left—they attacked me. I was invulnerable as one of their own rocks, and as well might they have wasted their strength in striking against these rocks as against my impenetrable armour.

I was not proof, however, against those fatigues, and that exhaustion of body, which are the inheritance of every being of the human race, and I now felt my strength rapidly failing in the protracted conflict. With admirable dexterity, my two assailants had eluded every blow, and still remained unwounded, although it was very evident their strength too was departing. As if conscious that it was so, they approached, determined, if possible, to finish the combat by a last and desperate effort. I heard the sword of the foremost descend with fearful rapidity through the air. Down it came, and, striking full upon my helmet's crest, in one instant,

was shivered into a thousand atoms. I sprung forward, with a wild exulting cry, and, raising my trusty sword high above my head, struck with resistless force and violence at that unarmed, exhausted wretch. His companion darted forward to intercept the blow; his extended sword met the encountering shock of mine, and both weapons were shivered to the hilt. Now we all three stood alike unarmed—but in my weak exhausted state, the odds were fearfully against me. That spirit, however, which had so long slumbered in my breast, was again awoke within it. I gave my gallant steed the spur, and dashing betwixt them, at once grappled a panting foe in either hand.

I had reckoned, however, without my host, or rather, in the ardour of the struggle, I had forgot to reckon at all; for, in their turn, like infuriated beasts of prey, they sprung grappling at my throat. I strove to throw

them to the earth; and they strove to drag me with them. But fierce and short was the fearful deadly struggle. At once, the grasp of the more powerful of the two relaxed; his strong and heavy hand released its hold; he fell, a lifeless corpse, from the back of his affrighted steed; and before me I saw the haughty Alice, with an exulting smile upon her countenance, and a dagger yet reeking warm with the heart's blood of my foe, brandished in her hand.

Accustomed as I had been to every scene which the human imagination could depict, I gazed for a moment with sickening horror at the sight. Of that moment my remaining foe took advantage, and, turning his fleet Arab from the scene, darted away with the rapidity of one of his own desert winds, and, in less than a minute's time, was lost and hidden from our view.

Then was I left alone with the spectre-like

form of that haughty fair.—I hastened to dismount from my weary steed, but ere I could advance to offer the aid of my services to Alice, she too stood beside me on the ground. I undid the fastenings of my helmet, that I might, for a few minutes, breathe the comparative freshness even of the hot and blasting air. In silence, Alice gazed upon my movements. I looked on her, and saw the bloody reeking dagger still grasped in her hand, and I turned, loathing and shuddering, from the sight. She smiled, with something of contempt upon her countenance, for a moment, and then—casting the dagger far away—she rushed into my arms, laid her cheek upon my shoulder, and in the very exhaustion of a noble spirit, wept a flood of child-like tears, which rolled, unrestrained, upon the ground.

I now felt my situation more dangerous than when I stood with the dead serpent at my feet, expecting to be grappled by the powerful ani-

mal who reared his shaggy form before me. The loneliness of the spot, the beauty of Alice, the tears of the noble maiden,—and few hearts can resist such tears,—the kindness of her murmured thanks, the blessings she bestowed upon the preserver of her life, might have softened the sternest of human hearts. But mine was sheathed around in the impenetrable armour of despair. All that had gladdened the waste of a weary existence, had vanished from my sight. The gentle being whose kindness had soothed my wounded spirit, and well nigh healed a broken heart, was gone—for ever gone—and I was left, even in the midst of many, a solitary and a heartless wanderer, bearing within me the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched—the fearful gnawings of a guilty and upbraiding conscience. Oh God—how just thy judgments are! Yet in thy mercy I can trust, and bless thee, and praise thee, and

give thee thanks, that even thousands upon thousands of years of wretchedness and sorrow here, are as nothing when compared to the ceaseless gnawing of that remorse which the unrepentant sinner is destined to endure, through the long period of a never-ending eternity.

I could not, however, bear my present situation. The past rose rapidly to my view, and darted with so fearful a swiftness on the withered reins of my heart, that my whole frame was convulsed, and shook with visible emotion. Alice raised her head suddenly from my shoulder—she fixed her keen piercing eyes upon my countenance, and, in a voice full of the fondest solicitude, anxiously enquired if I had been hurt. I shook my head in silence, and motioned her to mount her steed, while I turned aside, lest her penetrating eyes should read the emotion of my soul in the workings of my countenance.

Silently she obeyed, and, vaulting upon my

courser, I spoke in a firm, yet melancholy tone of voice. "Lady, there is danger here—hordes of these wandering tribes are lurking nigh. Let not, therefore, I beseech thee, these precious moments pass away, or we shall yet both be ruined and undone."

"Alice of Anjou requires not to be reminded of her duty"—she answered in a somewhat haughty tone of voice.

I looked upon her, and I believe a slightly marked surprise may have been visible upon my countenance. But no feeling of resentment could harbour long within a breast so noble as that of Alice. She turned aside her head, I believe, to hide a falling tear, as she gave the rein to her horse, and urged him down the steep and dangerous path with the rapidity of an eagle's flight.

"What a strange and unaccountable mixture is that proud being composed of"—I whispered to myself, as I followed her retreat

with all the rapidity I could; somewhat, I will own, alarmed for her safety in the fearful race. But her courser was of the winged breed—sure of foot, endless in his wind, and on he passed with unabated speed, while not one hair of his sleek coat was turned, and not one thick breath was drawn, to shew that he underwent more than an ordinary exertion of his strength and speed. As for my worn and wearied steed, encumbered as he was, he soon lagged behind, although I contrived to keep within sight of Alice till I saw a party of our own mounted troops approach from the direction in which I judged our camp lay. Immediately she reined in her steed, while the rough warriors greeted her with every demonstration of respect and joy. I soon joined them, and we now proceeded, surrounded by our guard, in safety to the camp.

On reaching our leaguer, we found all in tumult and confusion, and the lion-hearted Richard himself upon the point of issuing forth

in search of his noble cousin. The gentle Berengera wept tears of joy as she clasped her to her heart. The haughty Alice smiled, and, as we proceeded to the royal tent, recounted, in a more than usually animated tone, the adventure she had undergone, throwing her own noble bearing, as much as might be, into the shade, while my poor endeavours were brought forward to the full and dazzling glare of day.

The praise of man was a thing I could not value, for I knew it to be alike empty and vain. Yet I could not help feeling a glow of satisfaction arise within my breast when the noble king turned round, and warmly grasped my hand within his own. Not a word passed his lips, but his look spoke more than a thousand words could have done—the pressure of his hand conveyed worlds to the heart—and who is he that lives or breathes who would not have felt proud to have deserved the gratitude of the lion-hearted king of England? The

gentle Berengera, too, smiled upon me through her tears, and extended her fair hand, which I pressed respectfully to my lips, and felt within me that I had been more nobly rewarded than if the crown of a conquered province had been placed upon my brow :—crowns and sceptres—gold and silver—yea, all the wealth the world could boast of, were as nought to me, but the kindly feelings of a noble heart were much.

On the following day, the country around gradually began to assume a different appearance. The long, desolate, and deserted tracts we had passed were left behind; one by one, every trace of devastation vanished, till at last the richness of the soil, and the splendour of the cultivation told that we approached the immediate neighbourhood of the Holy City. Thousands of our host, however, had been mowed down by the hand of pestilence; thousands had perished beneath the miseries they had undergone; and yet so wild was the

enthusiasm, so fierce the fanaticism of those who still remained, that they pressed forward, weak and weary as they were, with a new and invigorated ardour that nothing could restrain, believing that the fell hand of pestilence and disease had only thinned their ranks of the weak, the wavering, and the doubting, who were all unworthy to behold the beauties of the Holy City.

Those who remained, counted themselves worthy; and they now pressed forward, every one anxious to gain the first glimpse of that delightful vision, the beauty of which had haunted his imagination, even in his own land. Mount Sion lay before them, but its summit was soon ascended; and then Jerusalem—the long wished for, ardently desired Jerusalem—surrounded by its precious fields and valleys, in all its sacred majesty, burst upon the view. One loud—one universal and triumphant shout of joy burst from every being of that numerous

host. Then all was still and silent as the grave, and those who had but now shouted the triumphant song of joy, from the stout hearted warrior even to the humble child, knelt upon the ground in silent adoration of their Redeemer and their God. Tears flowed upon the ground like floods of wintry rain; and even *my* eyes were embued with the damp of excited feeling which that splendid scene was so eminently calculated to produce.

My breast heaved with ill suppressed emotion when I gazed upon the Holy City, and my stubborn heart melted within me, when I thought of a Saviour's love and all he had endured. Now, in the lapse of many hundreds of years, I stood once more in the midst of the scene of his sufferings; and that which I had before witnessed, rose with the resistless force of a never dying memory to my view.

I gazed upon those resplendent towers, and every feeling of the present was at once lost

in the vivid remembrance of the past. And oh! how beautiful and bright, how replete with calm thankfulness and joy, were the visions of everlasting peace and love which that remembrance brought again to view. There was much of heaven in every thought, and but little of earth to stain the gladness of that moment; and were I once more to turn over every page in the sullied book of life, I know not that I could ever light upon so brilliant a prospect to gladden the recesses of my heart again.

Mine were the feelings of the inner man, but even to those who had never beheld Jerusalem and its surrounding scenery before, there was much of sacred and imposing beauty to strike upon the heart. There is nothing more calculated to elevate the mind of man from earth to heaven, than the sublime and beauteous works of Nature! His thoughts arise "from Nature up to Nature's God," and

in no one place of the inhabited world could this principle be brought into more vigorous exercise than in the contemplation of the Holy City, with its surrounding wild and variegated scenery, and the long train of interesting associations to which its view gave rise.

Words were but feeble to describe the imposing grandeur of its beauty, when beheld from Sion's Mount. In the far distance, as well as near at hand, rugged and precipitous rocks rose in frowning majesty over the most luxuriant and delightful valleys. Yet ever and anon from the crevices of these dark rocks, the fruitful olive, and the rich vine, and the fresh and blooming mulberry-tree, and a thousand graceful plants and flowers, were seen to spring, clothing in Nature's gayest colours the blackness of their frowning heads.

A rich and splendid harvest of fruits and corn spread over the plains and valleys under-

neath. On our right, the three glorious summits of the Mount of Olives rose. In the distance, the remnants of the Garden of Gethsemane flourished in a beauty scarce their own. More near, the ruined Sepulchres of Jehoshophat—of Absalom—and of Zecharias—reared their heads; while round their base the beauteous Kedron glided in pure and silvery brightness, winding throughout the whole length of that rich and verdant vale. In front, the fountain of Siloah sparkled in the sun, and, scarce a stone's throw beyond its refreshing stream, in the midst of a wilderness of varied beauty, the Holy City rose, with its flourishing and stately domes, its gilded minarets and marble palaces—its towers, churches, and monasteries—a magnificent assemblage, the glorious splendour of which glittering in the sun's bright and dazzling rays might have restored their lost vision to the blind, or called forth a shout of

admiration from the dead. With what emotions then could the living look upon a scene like this?

I gazed around, and within the far scope of all that spreading host, I beheld no eye in which the tear-drop of repentance did not shine. The proud, the haughty Alice bent her to the ground, and her dimmed eye, and the suffocating sob arising from her breast, told how deep at least, if not abiding, the feelings of present humiliation were. The piercing eyes of the lion-hearted king had lost somewhat of their brightness, and the scornful curl of his lip was formed to breathe the words of heartfelt prayer—the first, perhaps, that king had ever uttered; for it is not the gladness, the joy of youth, that will teach the heart to pray; sorrow and suffering are the teachers of this useful lesson.† Alas! noble king! ere long severely wert thou schooled by both.

The kind, the amiable Berengera pressed her husband's hand, for he was more to her than all the world beside; and that gentle pressure recalled his every thought back to this lower world again. Up sprung the lion-hearted king—forth flew his glittering sword from its protecting sheath—the standards of England and the Cross were unfurled to the gale—the wild clang of martial music sounded, and the loud shout of "Jerusalem—Jerusalem—'Tis the will of God,"—burst in exstacy and devotion from the lips and hearts of the advancing host.

Down, like a cloud of sand when the south wind blows, rolled that host upon the plain. Proud nobles and princes, gay and gallant knights, brave and hardy soldiers—all animated with the same high and chivalrous spirit—all eager to be foremost in the charge. Danger and distress were forgotten in the bright scene before them. Past toils and difficulties were

thrown behind their back—the final object of their long and perilous pilgrimage was in view, and, ere the darkness of the night came, the army of the Lord lay encamped, far and wide, around the beleagured walls of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XII.

"If I forget thee, Oh Jerusalem! let my right hand forget her cunning."

PSALMS.

EARLY on the following morning I stole from the camp, while the many were yet buried in repose, to enjoy the melancholy gratification of once more viewing those scenes, the remembrance of which, the lapse of hundreds of years had not been able to efface from my heart.

The surrounding scenery was still the same; but, alas! where were they who had in former days cultivated the luxuriant and far-spreading

vines that were wont to flourish there? They were dead, and the vines they had cherished, gone. No more would the hours of vintage echo with their mirth; no more would songs of delight issue from their lips, while, in dyed garments, they trod the wine-press with rejoicing hearts. Where the purple vines had once grown, the far-spreading camp of Richard alone was seen; where the Roman soldier, in the pride of a thousand victories had stood, the turbaned Infidel held a high parade; and on those towers, from which the standard of the Cæsars had floated on the breeze, the curling Crescent shone.

The change smote upon my heart, and with impious voice I cursed aloud the hour when my eyes were permitted to see that proud city and its Holy Sepulchre in the hands of the unbelieving Turk, and that fair country about to become the scene of a desolating warfare. But while I yet spoke, the morning sun burst

with glorious splendour on the scene, and I shouted, in an extacy of admiration, as I gazed upon the sight.

Far below me, stretching all along the valley, the white tents of the invading armament were pitched; and glowingly, beauteously, they shone in the rays of the rising sun. Piles of glittering arms were ranged before them, and the green, and the gold, and the crimson bucklers of the knights shone with resplendent beauty on their walls. Lightly and gracefully their floating banners waved around, while from a gentle eminence in the centre of the camp, the standard of the lion-hearted Richard hung its cumbrous folds drooping to the ground. No slight breeze could spread the folds of that standard to the air; but had a tempest blown, it would have reared its head, and streamed upon the blast, and proudly stood, unharmed, amidst the war of a thousand conflicting elements.

On the other side of the Kedron, Jerusalem, in sacred majesty, reared its proud and gorgeous towers. When I looked upon its almost impregnable situation, and beheld the strength of its fortifications, I mourned over the folly of those who deemed they could subdue so strong a fortress.

The city stood upon two hills, divided by a deep valley, from which on both sides it was totally inaccessible. From the nature of the country, intersected by numerous valleys, it was also inaccessible from many other points, and where it was not so naturally, the hand of man had reared three broad and massy walls, well fortified by strong towers, to defend the beloved city. The first of these walls had been built in the days of David and of Solomon, and you may well judge of its strength, when I tell you that even now it stood. It began at the tower called Hippicus, and extending to the Xistus, joined the Cominē-house, and

ended at the west cloister of the Temple.—But I talk of things familiar to my sight. The second wall began at the gate Gennath, and reached to the tower Antonia. The third wall began at the tower Hippicus, and extending to the monument of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, passed by the Sepulchre at the Caverns of the Kings, rounded the Fuller's Monument, and joined the old wall at the valley of Cedron. I remember the foundation stone of this wall being laid. It was in the days of King Agrippa, and the stone was laid by his own royal hands, amidst the shouts of surrounding thousands. Had it been finished as originally intended, no human power, I well believe, could have subdued or stormed the city. Each stone was twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad, cemented and joined together as if it that wall had been meant to rise against the ravaging hand of time, and rear its proud head amidst the convulsions of

expiring nature. Its entire height was twenty cubits, and above it were battlements of two cubits surmounted by strong turrets of three cubits more. It was defended by ninety towers, each twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in height, square, and solid as the wall itself, and built with a niceness so exquissite, that the most close observer could scarcely discover the separation of each indi-ivdual stone. The middle wall in like manner was defended by forty towers, and the old wall by sixty. On each of these towers the silver Crescent shone, while the intervening spaces of two hundred cubits, bristled with a thousand glittering spears that glanced and sparkled in the sunny rays like the bright dew drops of the morning, or the dazzling diamonds of Golconda.

The glittering fanes of these turrets seemed to mingle with the white clouds of the morning that rested upon their points. But far

above the rest shone, in resplendent beauty, the three towers erected by King Herod. For largeness, beauty, and strength, they were, as narrated by one who for many centuries has been deemed an old historian, "beyond all that is in the habitable earth." They were built by the king to gratify the feelings of private affection, and they were dedicated to the memory of three persons who had been dear to him in life. These were his brother—his friend—and his wife. The young and lovely Mariamne he had slain in a moment of ungovernable jealousy. The two others, Hippicus and Phæsoelus, had fallen fighting for their king. The towers erected to their memory were built of white marble, and the enormous stones of which they were composed were so exactly and so beautifully united, that each tower appeared to have been one entire rock, hewn by the hands of the artificer into its present gorgeous shape.—Nothing was

wanting to make them appear in splendour like royal palaces; and so commanding was the situation on which they were erected, that he who stood upon their highest summit could have seen the distant land of Arabia, at the rising of the sun, and the utmost limits of what had once been the possessions of the Hebrew, to the West.

I know not how long I could have remained, gazing upon the splendid sight before me, and recalling to mind many a long-forgotten event that now arose from the deep abyss of memory with a vivid freshness which, from the lapse of time, could scarcely have been expected to exist, had not my waking dream been dissipated by the shouts and the clamour of the multitude beneath. I looked, and beheld the whole array of Richard's camp at once teem with life and motion. I hastened to take my place in the proud array, and found that the heart of every one beat high with the

hope of approaching victory and triumph.—The bold knights dashed from place to place on their warlike steeds—their helmets glittering, their plumes nodding, and their armour gleaming in the sun. The lassitude and despair, which not many days before pervaded the feelings of every being in the camp, had disappeared. Each bosom now beat full of confidence and hope. The banners floated in the air—the strains of the clarion sounded wild and shrill—bursts of martial music broke upon the ear—the word was given—and the whole array of the crusaders passed onward, anticipating the accomplishment of their most sanguine hopes, and determined, in the attainment of them, to conquer or to die.

Ere, however, they had proceeded many paces on their way, a huge portion of the wall of Jerusalem seemed to open to their view. It was the gate of St. Stephen swung back upon its hinges, and, in the place of that which had

formerly appeared a dead wall, a moving and a living mass of steeds and horsemen thronged. Through its proud and open portals they dashed with headlong speed, each, according to the peculiar warfare of the Turks, acting for himself, and altogether independent of his neighbour—consequently, they came down, rolling like the light mists upon the mountain's side, without order or array. But they came with the lightning's speed;—a shower of darts, shot right in the faces of the advancing army of the Lord, for a moment darkened the surrounding air, and when they had fallen to the ground, the assailing enemy, who had appeared almost at the sword's point, had vanished, and were seen in the far distance, like so many grains of sand, scattered over the plain.

Again the same manœuvre was repeated, and again with like success; for the heavy war-horses of the knights, laden as they were

with a weight of panoply and armour, were no match in swiftness for the light, active, and beautifully-trained horses of the Saracens.—A third time the attack was renewed, and hundreds of the Christian host were falling, dead or wounded, under the assaults of an enemy, who, when they attempted to reach him, disappeared like water spilt upon the ground. It was in vain that the lion-hearted Richard headed his knights and called upon them to advance. They might as well have charged the south wind, or sought to overtake the cloud of sand that sweeps across the desert.

In this extremity Richard gave orders for a feigned retreat. Slowly the hitherto advancing line retired, while on either flank two chosen bodies of cross-bowmen advanced, and, passing the Kedron, faced inwards so as to present an extensive front to each other. This disposition was scarcely made, when again those

light armed horsemen rushed forward to the charge. In their ardour to pursue the apparently retreating Christians, they came within the extended lines of the cross-bowmen, and were first apprised of their situation by an appalling shower of arrows which emptied many a saddle—and left the rider's noble steed to scour at freedom over the plain.

Uncertain whether to advance or flee, the Saracens in turn now hesitated, and wavered for a moment; but in that moment the best and bravest of the Christian knights advanced. A loud and simultaneous shout was raised on both sides, the one calling on their God, the other on their Prophet, and hand to hand, and blade to blade, thousands of brave and goodly warriors mixed in mortal combat. The Holy City continued to pour forth its myriads to the scene of strife. Heavy armed horsemen, foot soldiers, and archers, were among them, and in the lapse of a short space of time the en-

gagement had become general, and the green valley was slippery with the blood of the dying and the dead, and the crystal Kedron poured along a purple and ensanguined stream.

Richard was in every part of the wide field performing prodigies of valour. Death followed in his train; and at every blow he struck, a headless, lifeless Saracen rolled upon the plain. I saw a huge Turk, gigantic as one of the sons of Anac, mounted on a strong and powerful steed, and, as Richard among the Infidels, so he among the Christians, disseminated terror and dismay. With a ponderous iron mace, wielded as if it had been a child's bauble, he dealt death around, crushing as moths all those who ventured to resist his proud career.—Steed and rider fell beneath every blow; helmet — hauberk —panoply— cracked and broke like feeble manufactures of porcelain and clay, beneath his apparently slightest touch. His example inspired the

army of Infidels with strength and courage. He shouted aloud—" Dogs—villains—Christians—cowards—go, wield the distaff, not the sword,"—and, before his single arm, whole battalions of Christian warriors seemed on the point of giving way, when the gallant Richard, mounted on his Cyprus barb, flew like lightning to the spot. Not, however, like the lightning of a summer night, which skims along in a harmless, playful mood, did Richard come. He swept on like the lurid flame which darts from the bosom of a dense and sultry cloud, the precursor of the awful peal, which, ere thought can pass along the mind, follows the woe-denouncing flash.—He encountered the proud Saracen in his fierce career—he confronted him for one moment with a look more proud—more haughty—more imperious than his own. As if by mutual consent, the contending armies ceased their strife, and in one moment the far-extended

plain became, as it were, the field of tournament on which these two proud warriors alone were destined to try their strength.

All was hushed and still—but it was the stillness which precedes the coming storm—the desolating tempest. In full career the steeds of the contending warriors met. Both reeled beneath the momentary shock, but that of the gigantic Saracen had the advantage, and the mettled barb of Richard was thrown upon its haunches. Happy for the brave king that it was so—for the ponderous iron mace, swung with resistless force, and destined to fall upon the monarch's head, merely grazed his crest, and left him unscathed and unharmed. Not so the haughty Turk.—Ere he could regain the position he had lost through the unresisted swing of his own heavy weapon, Richard, by a well-directed reverse, had struck him to the ground. That sword which dealt no double stroke, had not lost its power.

Alighting upon the right shoulder of the Saracen, it passed through to his left side. The ponderous mace fell from his powerless quivering grasp, his head and shoulders rolled beside it, while his lower extremities, instinctively keeping their seat in the saddle, were borne far away, throughout the midst of the thronging multitudes, to the walls of the Holy City, spreading terror and dismay around.—Few arms could have struck so fierce a blow,—and every warrior in the Moslem array now seemed to quail before the monarch's look.

But the conflict was renewed, and soon became general as before. Richard was still the meteor, in whose track a wide and far-spread devastation followed. Nothing could withstand the vigour of his career—till he met, front to front, with one who, like himself, had been dealing death wherever he went. He was of slender make—light and active—

but his well-formed limbs, and the apparent vigour of his thews and sinews spoke of strength. His frame seemed enured to fatigue and toil, and his proud and noble bearing, and the quick glancing of his eagle eye, marked impatience of controul and contempt of danger alike. By that proud bearing, and the beauty of his steed—of a breed never backed but by a descendant of the Prophet—and the richness of its caparisons, and the splendour of his armour, I knew the warrior to be the noble Saladin himself.

For some moments the two monarchs eyed each other with that glad look of satisfaction which beams in the warrior's eye when he meets an enemy worthy of his steel. Oh! what is it to a monarch to crush thousands of nameless beings to the dust—what is it to that joy he experiences when, in the tented field, he meets his equal in rank and fame—knowing that if he be destined to fall he dies by a

hand as brave, as gallant as his own—and if victory crowns his sword, that the blood he sheds will not sully its lustre, nor dim its brightness with a single stain?

Richard stretched forth his hand,—it was grasped by Saladin, and then each threw aside his buckler, as if it became not a monarch, when contending with a monarch, to trust to aught but his goodly sword. They backed their steeds that they might run a free and gallant course. The proud animals neighed aloud, impatient for the coming conflict, as if they too were animated with the thirst of glory that burned within the breasts of their respective masters. On either side, the multitudes covering the plain and the ascending eminences around, stood in breathless expectation. Silence, for a moment, pervaded the whole field, as if that goodly array, like the army seen in the vision of the Prophet, had been formed

from dry bones, and stood there before they either breathed or lived.

Suddenly a shout was given; it was echoed back from the walls of Jerusalem, the minarets and the temples of the Holy City rung again, and the monarchs started forward in their fierce career. Midway they met, and the resistless sword of the lion-hearted king would have closed the earthly account of the brave Saladin, had not his noble steed, startled by the meteor gleam that flashed before his eyes, reared on high, and by the sacrifice of his own, preserved his master's life. Down fell the sword of Richard—down, like the lightning's flash, upon the forehead of the noble animal. The armour which guarded its head was crushed, shivered, split into a thousand pieces, and, in an instant, the animal stumbled forward a breathless—lifeless corpse. As it fell, the highly tempered sabre of Saladin slightly

grazed the flowing mane of Richard's barb; but slight as that touch was, it severed the mane in two, and cut a thin plate from Richard's armour. Instantly the king drew back, and sprung from his steed to assist his fallen foe—but ere he could effect his generous purpose, the Infidel army, with a wild outcry, deeming their Sultan had been slain, rushed forward to the rescue of his body. The Christian army, on the other hand, came to their leader's aid, and the combatants on either side were once more engaged in a general and deadly conflict.

I had watched the proceedings of the two monarchs on whom the eyes of myriads were fixed, and a feeling of ineffable contempt stole over me when I thought of the imaginary halo with which the adventitious circumstances of worldly wealth and power surrounded two beings, who, at the best, were but formed of dust and clay. Yet there was something noble in their bearing. The war-horse, at the trum-

pet's blast, betrays his birth and breeding, and his high spirit seems to work with new energy within him. Is it so with man? and do birth and education indeed create a nobler soul?

Such was the question I asked myself, but its answer was not so easily to be found. In the long and weary course of my existence I had seen many of the highest rank whose nobility shewed itself in the conscious dignity of every word and action. But I had likewise seen the peasant, toiling for his daily food, in whose breast sentiments of as proud and honourable a nature had taken up their abode. Again, I had known the high and mighty ones of the earth descend to actions of the meanest dye, and sully the fair fame of a long line of ancestors by the blackness of their guilt. That ennobling spirit, therefore, which spurns the thought of degradation, springs not, assuredly, from birth! Is it, then, from the force of habit or education it arises?—The light of

chivalry, which had so recently dawned upon a slumbering world, and brought with it a whole train of new sentiments and new ideas, had, it is true, awoke within the warrior's breast something of a corresponding hue, and for the sake of virtue and of honour led him forth to deeds of daring and renown.—But this had been the effect merely of progressive principles of worldly wisdom instilled into the mind of youth, and, like all else that has its rise in the visionary schemes of man, it soon became a sullied and corrupted system. Even at the time of which I write, in the short period which had passed from its institution, the finger of decay was visible—the hand of corruption had traced many a blackening line across the purity of its pristine beauty—and recreant knights, and false leaders, despising oaths, and breaking covenants, and tarnishing the brightness of their glory by the meanness

of their guilt, had appeared. As little, therefore, from the mere lessons of human lore does that ennobling spirit spring! To another source we must look for its birth;—to another and a higher source—even to those precepts which are inculcated by the word of Him who cannot lie, who hateth iniquity, and turneth from the sight of evil, and whose vice-gerent—the small still voice within us—will never speak in vain to that mind which makes His precepts its rule of conduct, and guide, through life.

While these reflections passed through my mind, I saw the noble Richard, borne down by a crowd that came like the overwhelming rush of many waters, fall upon the ground. Much as the lessons of a long life had schooled me to a cold contempt of worldly praise and glory, nay, almost to the absolute deadness of every worldly feeling, I could not see the hero thus borne down by the mean ones of the earth,

without stretching forth a hand to save him. *I* had nought to fear from an opposing host, even had I not been backed by myriads, all eager to rush forward to the rescue of their king.

I darted to the spot where the helpless Richard lay. I threw myself from my steed, and, standing over his prostrate form, dealt death and destruction around, with a vigour that the snows of a thousand winters had not been able to quench, nor the heat of many summers to enervate. I laughed aloud as the blows showered upon me like heavy drops of wintry rain—I shouted to see the well tempered scimitars glance like lightning from my armour, or shiver to the hilt in the hands of those by whom they were wielded. Soon the opposing foe fell back, more through a superstitious fear than from the force of arms; and Richard, taking advantage of a moment's breathing space, freed himself from the dead

and dying by whom he was surrounded, and once more wielded that trusty sword which seldom failed to guard it's master's head.

Again, however, the Infidels returned to the conflict, and then we stood for some time contending against most fearful odds.

"Thou art bewitched," exclaimed Richard, as I darted forward to receive the blows of a dozen sabres, destined for the monarch's head. Harmlessly they glanced upon mine, while the sword of the king mowed down in ranks all who opposed its fearful sweep. Flights of arrows showered upon our armour, but they rebounded from it, and fell headless to the ground. Still, however, when one warrior fell, his place, hydra-like, seemed to be supplied by two; and human nature could not long have withstood that constant succession of fresh and vigorous arms which were opposed to ours, had not new succours reached us in crowds, more daring, if not so numerous as

the Moslem, and, once more, friend and foe, Infidel and Christian, were mixed and mingled, hand to hand, in one confused and undistinguishable mass.

But what boots it to go through the detail of a scene where the Angel of Death rode triumphant on the blast? The dim shades of night fell upon the earth, man could no longer behold his fellow-creature that he might destroy him, and the fierce work of carnage and blood was finished for a day. Silently the two armies withdrew, the Infidel within the walls of the Holy City, to desecrate the temple of the living God;—the Christian to his tent, to spend the night in aught but prayer or praise. Neither could boast that he had gained a victory. The green plain, in all its wide extent, was covered with the dying and the dead, and the gentle Kedron rushed along, a swollen and impetuous stream, foaming with the blood of the thousands who had fallen upon its banks.

When we reached the tent of the royal Richard, where the watches of the night had been properly distributed and placed, we found the gentle Berengera, and Alice, all anxiety for our arrival. Some faint rumour had reached the former, of her royal husband's danger, and now that she saw him safe, she burst into an impassioned flood of tears, and rushed forward to conceal them in his arms. It was a beautiful sight to see that gentle being rest upon the breast of the rough warrior, while her thin silken attire twined its folds around his massy armour. And yet, I know not but that there was more of beauty in the soft sweetness of those caresses which the heroic monarch—stern, fearless, unbending in the hour of war—now bestowed upon his innocent and lovely queen. Gently, smilingly, he chid her for her idle fears, then turned, suddenly turned, as if half ashamed of the emotion he had shewn, and presented me as the preserver of his life. The young queen stretched her hand towards me,

and I pressed it to my lips. But Alice—the haughty Alice—who had been gazing on the preceding scene with ill-suppressed emotions of impatience—as if struck by the lightning's flash, the true child of impulse, ever yielding to the feelings of the moment—darted forward, and ere I could prevent her, seized my unwilling hand, and pressed it to her heart and forehead, while the unbidden tears rushed in torrents from her eyes.

I never beheld a more strange or wayward being. But nothing of created kind, however peerless, however beautiful, could now touch my heart. It was dead to love—its door was shut against that tender passion, which, in most hearts, reigns with its resistless and impetuous sway but once in life; and when this is the case, and there exists no union of sentiment—no corresponding feeling—no sympathy—no unbounded confidence—no resting of heart upon heart—nothing in common betwixt

one who loves and the object of her love, the symptoms of that love can only be repaid with coldness, if not with worse—dislike.

Berengera smiled—Richard laughed aloud—and vowed the gallant knight should be his cousin yet. I shook my head mournfully, and turned away to repose me in mine own tent; but, as I turned, I saw the haughty Alice draw up her tall figure to its proudest height; and, as I left the tent, I heard her voice exclaim, "Proud man—think not Alice of Anjou is to be thus despised for ever!"

CHAPTER XIII.

"Savagely
They glanced upon each other—all was done,
Water, and wine, and food—and you might see
The longings of the cannibal arise
(Altho' they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes."

DON JUAN.

DAY after day, week after week, month after month, passed away—but still the Holy City proudly reared its many towers on high, and looked down with cold contempt on those who sought to lay the masses of her strength crumbling in the dust.

During this protracted period, however, there was no idleness on either side. Innumerable

were the assaults made by the Christians; innumerable the sallies of the besieged—and the plains before Jerusalem became almost the daily scene of the most fearful and extended bloodshed. The cross was raised on high, as a banner—not of peace, but of war; and the silver crescent, the emblem of the pale moon, smiled on nothing but fields strewed with the dying and the dead. Thousands upon thousands had fallen, and their unburied corpses, forming whole weltering masses of corruption, filled the air with a putrifying and disgusting smell. The worst, however, was still to come. The burning heats of summer dried up and parched the surrounding country. The grateful and refreshing pool of Siloah ceased to afford its water—the reservoirs and streams in the neighbourhood had been poisoned by the enemy—and the devastating career of war had torn to pieces, or trodden under foot, the purple vines—the mulberry-

trees—and the pleasant fruits—that were wont to gratify the palate with their refreshing coolness and delicious flavour. Where these had flourished, dry and arid rocks and sands alone appeared. The green and fertile meadows were trampled into dust and mire—the blackness of desolation frowned where beauty and gladness had so lately reigned—and pestilence and famine strode with gaunt and fearful steps around.

The camp resounded with the wildest supplications that heaven might open its windows and pour down its floods upon the earth. But our prayers arose in vain, for the sun still shone with the same fierce unchanging brightness. Once in my long life I had watched a speck arise slowly upon the far horizon, and it was the precursor of a fearful storm. With what shouts of joy would such another speck now have been hailed; for the agony of thirst, the pain which preyed upon our parched vitals,

was more than human nature could sustain. Hunger—aye! famishing hunger, and of that we had enough too, might have been borne, for it is said, and I believe it to be true, that hunger will at last feed itself, and the sufferer cease to feel its pain,—but the torment of increasing and unquenched thirst, preying upon, burning, scorching the tortured vitals,—who can bear?

Night after night, the cry of our heralds—"Lord, succour the Holy Sepulchre!"—became more faint and faint. It had ceased to strike one corresponding chord within the hearts of those who heard. Day after day, the sufferers became more languid—more weak—more dispirited;—faint, heartless, *hopeless*. The cry of the Psalmist, "Oh! who will shew us any good," was ever in their mouths, and I believe, in all that wide extended host there breathed not one who, at that, the eleventh hour, would not gladly have laid him down, and yielded up

his spirit to escape the agonizing tortures his shattered frame endured.

To me these tortures were insufferable, because they had no end in view. Alas! how often did a busy memory now recall the blessed days I had passed with my gentle Zehlima. They were ever present to my mind, and as the gloom of night is deepened by the recollection of the brightness and beauty of a dazzling day, so the remembrance of the past, knowing it with all its sweetness and delight to be for ever gone, only added to the sadness and horror of the present hour.

The recollection of those days struck deeply on my mind, and I wondered that it should be so; for a few short years at best, and Zehlima must have gone the way of all flesh.—She must have passed "that bourne from which no traveller can return," and *then* I should have been left alone—*hopelessly alone*—for to me she could never return, and when *I* might go

to her, no created power could tell. I would, however, have been near all that remained of the sainted one—I would have watched her lonely grave—I would have awaited the day of final retribution, where no human eye could have looked upon me—no mortal hand stretched itself forth to disturb my rest. This, at least, would have been repose; for I, too, should have lain, as it were, in the grave, where the hand of the spoiler cannot smite, nor the venom of the human tongue, more deadly than the serpent's bite, ever reach.——But I wander from the detail of my present fate.

It was in the midst of those sufferings to which I have alluded, that the determination was formed to make a last—a final assault upon the Holy City. This was the resolution of despair; and when communicated throughout the camp, it was received with the shout that despair gives when one solitary hope of rescue is held out to view. It was obvious to all,

that in the situation in which we were now placed, the united efforts of pestilence and famine would soon have swept whole myriads to the tomb. To retreat would have been as fatal, for nothing lay behind but a long dreary and deserted waste of country. In the downfall of Jerusalem alone, therefore, the shadow of a hope existed. To many desponding spirits, indeed, this appeared as hopeless as any measure that could have been devised. To me it did not; for I had watched the proceedings of the enemy with a scrutinizing eye for many days. Their sallies had been wofully diminished in number, and they were no longer marked by that decided character of enterprise which had at first so strongly stamped its impress on them. They were few and feeble, carelessly conducted, and generally ended in a hasty retreat from those who were too feeble to pursue. The walls and fortified places were no longer covered with the usual number of

defenders; and to those who still remained, the exercise of their duty seemed a weariness and toil. Their arms glittered not in the beams of the sun, for a corroding rust had obscured their brightness; and they who should have borne them, rested idly on them for support. From these appearances I judged, and rightly judged, that famine had been making as fearful strides within the city as it had without. In the eagerness of the Infidel to cut off supplies from the Christian camp, he had well nigh exhausted his own; and it was obvious that the salvation of both armies now depended upon the fall of Jerusalem, or the immediate completion of a truce.

The assault being determined on, the work of preparation proceeded with all of vigour and alacrity that remained within our camp. A new hope was held out to those who had been oppressed and drooping with fatigue—that the way of access to the Holy Sepulchre

would soon be open to all;—and, cheered by this hope, they gladly lent the helping hand to that which was required for its attainment. Night and day the camp resounded with the noise of hammers, and the harsh grating of saws, and the hewing of axes, and of the other instruments used in the formation of the engines necessary for the attack. Ere long these were all completed, and when the evening preceding the day destined for the assault arrived, the whole camp joined in prayer, and then lay down upon their arms to recruit their weary frames for the arduous duties of the ensuing morn.

That morn shone a bright and glorious one. Loud was the shout of joy with which its beauty was beheld. Loud the shout with which the golden minarets and marble palaces of the Holy City were hailed, as they stood smiling in its light;—and louder still the shout of exultation which arose from the approaching

host, as the huge machines, constructed for assailing the ramparts and battering the walls, were put in motion for the attack. Onward they were moved, till placed close beside the outer wall. Then the word was given—and the assault commenced. The scaling ladders were reared against the walls, as if by magic. Crowds rushed forward to ascend them, but ere they could gain a footing on the ramparts, they were hurled to the earth, and scattered like the dry leaves of autumn in the blast. The ladders were destroyed and broken, and the assailants, crushed and maimed by the huge stones that were thrown from the walls upon them, were rolled in hundreds to the earth beneath.

On the other hand, the ranks of the Moslem were thinned by the constant discharge of missiles from the higher stories of the battering towers. These huge towers were formed of three distinct compartments; the lowest of

which was inhabited by the engineers who guided the machine; the next, by those whose duty it was to batter and assail the walls; and the upper was filled with well-armed soldiers, who, under protection of the covering afforded by the tower itself, and that of their enormous bucklers, assailed the enemy on the walls with every sort of destructive missile that human ingenuity could invent.

But every effort proved in vain. Hundreds were falling around. The besieged poured down boiling oil upon the assailants, and scattered quantities of Greek fire upon their machines. Many of these were, at length, consumed; and myriads of brave men were crushed beneath the crumbling masses of their ruins, while no breach was effected in the wall. For a moment the besiegers drew back, repulsed at every quarter. Then, with reanimated vigour, they again came forward to the attack. New ladders were planted, new

assailants ascended, and with such unceasing and unwearied activity were their sharp javelins flung, and huge masses of stone hurled against the besieged, that on one part of the rampart they gave way, and the moveable wooden bridge attached to the upper part of the nearest machine was lowered, and its opposite extremity rested on the wall.

I stood in the immediate vicinity at the time, and I saw that bridge slowly descend, and rest upon the wall, while the Christian warriors rushed forward till it was thronged and covered with their numbers. Then I heard the loud shout of triumph, as the foremost placed his foot upon the rampart, and the standard of the cross was half unfurled in the throng; when, lo! a powerful reinforcement of Infidels reached the spot—the bridge was thrown from its resting place—and those who had thronged upon the feeble stay, fell with it maimed and broken to the ground. Thus discomfited, the

besiegers retired, but it was only to return again with renewed vigour to the fight.

Throughout the live-long day this obstinate conflict was carried on, till at last, towards evening, the outward barriers were forced. The inner wall, however, was still to be overcome before a resting-place could be obtained. Huge battering machines were brought to bear upon it; but their ponderous blows might as well have struck against the solid rock. The breath of an infant might have blown away the whole dust occasioned by their assault, and the Infidel, scared as he had been by the Christian's success against the outer barriers, laughed and shouted at the vain attempt he made to shake the inner wall.

But the standard of the cross was now unfurled upon the outer barrier, which formed a covering and protection from whence England's best archers could annoy the enemy. Whenever an Infidel appeared, if but the

breadth of his hand were seen, he was marked and pierced by a flight of arrows. Many fell in this way, and many a turban rolled into the midst of the besieger's ranks, to tell those below the fate of him who had worn it. Yet what could myriads, even of England's arrows, effect against marble walls? Hundreds of the assailants were destroyed, while no impression was made on their part, and it appeared doubtful, if the Holy City would not at last prove impregnable to every assault of the Crusaders.

Things were in this extremity, when I suddenly remembered a well-known part of the inner wall which, from its situation, I knew, could scarcely be defended. It was in the immediate vicinity of David's tower. Often, in former years, the memory of which had almost past away, had I watched the daring youths of the Roman soldiery ascend and descend the steep black rocks on which it

was built, although they were deemed, and in truth appeared to be, almost inaccessible. Curiosity, and an inherent restlessness of mind, had prompted me to explore these rocks, and through many tortuous windings and sinuosities, and over pointed crags and projecting masses, I had discovered the possibility of ascending, at imminent personal risk and danger, to the wall that towered far above the base of these blackened rocks. That portion of the wall was not of height sufficient to prevent its being easily surmounted, and, in the present thinned and exhausted state of the defenders of the city, from an over confidence in the natural strength of its position, it was more than probable it would be but slightly guarded. I communicated my design of attack on this quarter to a few of the more daring of the knights and leaders around me, and obtaining their concurrence, we instantly determined upon making the attempt.

A few minutes served to bring us to the spot. When we arrived at the base of the rocks, we paused for a moment's space. The white wall toppled far, far above us, like some beautiful animal perched upon the summit of a frowning steep. Nothing dismayed, however, by the appearance of the fearful passage to its base, I assumed the office of leader of the party; and while every heart beat high with ardent hope and courage, we cautiously proceeded, with fearless eye, firm foot, and grasping hand, from point to point, and crag to crag, till we reached a small platform of sufficient breadth to afford a resting-place. It was fearful to look down from that dizzy height; but no heart quailed—no eye quivered—no frame shook,—and, after pausing for a few minutes, we bent ourselves to the accomplishment of the next stage of our dangerous expedition. Once more we proceeded over the pointed toppling rocks, rounding jutting precipices,

and climbing almost inaccessible steeps, on which the chamois could scarcely have obtained a footing, and from which one false step must have precipitated us into the valley a thousand feet below. The mountain eagle screamed and hovered above our heads,—the vulture, at times, almost flapped us with his wings, while with greedy eye and hungry look he seemed to watch us for his prey. Often were the more active of our party obliged to drag the less expert of their brethren up the face of the shelving precipices and rocks—often had he who first stood on a projecting crag been raised to the fearful eminence by the united efforts of those below, whose ascent, in turn, he was obliged from above to aid. At length, however, the perilous journey was achieved, and we stood, one and all, upon the summit of the rock, sheltered from observation, had any one been near, by a projecting buttress of the wall.

To surmount the wall, after ascending the perilous way which led to it, seemed an easy task. I was raised on the shoulders of one of the tallest of the knights, till my hand reached its summit. From thence to spring upon it was a moment's work, and I stood, the first of the Christian host, upon the inner wall of Jerusalem. As we had foreseen, there was no defender near. The fury of the conflict had carried away every one to where it raged like a tempest; and, lowering a ladder of ropes, with which I had been provided, the whole of our small party soon stood upon the summit of the wall.

Cautiously we now proceeded on our way, but no living being met us. In this quarter of the city, none seemed to breathe or move, and, to me, the deserted squares, and white but melancholy-looking houses seemed to frown with an ominous and foreboding aspect. When we reached the tower of David

the gates were open; the tower was undefended, and nothing lay in sight but a few dead and half-devoured carcasses, which had evidently been the prey of famine, and were now left to be destroyed by the birds of the air, or the vermin with which the city swarmed. I thrust them with loathing from me, and, ascending to the highest summit of the undefended tower, there, with mine own hand, planted the standard of the cross—that sacred symbol, which to me brought no comfort, because my sinful and unbelieving heart knew not the efficacy of the atoning blood of Him, whose death and sufferings, from this very spot, I had witnessed hundreds of years before.

A loud, a simultaneous shout, burst from the Christian army as the silken standard floated proudly on the air. That well-known standard was the work of Alice's own hands, and methought, above all the din and the

noise, and the confusion of war, I could distinguish the voice of Richard utter his peculiar and joyous war-cry when he beheld it. Not such was the shout that broke from the Infidels' lips. It was a cry of terror and dismay.—Yet, notwithstanding that cry of fear, I knew that, ere many minutes could elapse, a wild and furious host would pour down like a torrent on our station.—Leaving, therefore, the silken standard to float alone upon the tower, we rushed forward in the direction from whence the loudest sound proceeded. A considerable distance, however, lay betwixt us and the foe. But I knew all the turns and windings of the way, and, leaving the more direct road, in which we ran the risk of meeting, perchance, a stronger body than our own, I led the little band by the outskirts of the buildings, near to that spot where the glorious temple had once reared its own beautiful and majestic height. *Now,* the extreme part of

the area was occupied by a burying ground; and, passing the walls by which it was surrounded, we came in full view of its many tombs and graves. These have been called the habitations of the silent;—but here there was nothing of that peaceful serenity—that undisturbed repose—which waits upon the inmates of these dark and solitary dwellings. No—there was riot in the noon-day, and the living and the dead waged unequal war. Hundreds of famished wretches were there tearing the lifeless corpses from their dark repose, and, with their nails and teeth, mangling, devouring what of flesh remained upon their fast consuming bones. At sight of us these monsters fled, like so many demons of the night, from their horrible repast. Swiftly we followed on their track, fearful of the alarm which might be spread. But that fear was vain—for the streets were absolutely cleared, and no one, except these flying wretches, met

our view. I saw but one solitary being, who sate upon the ground, while she bent her back against a high stone, which served her for support. I went up to her and found she was a mother with an infant child hanging at her breast.—But, alas! she was cold and dead; and in vain the poor babe sought for food and nourishment where neither could be found; in vain it clung to that breast to which its smiling face had been so often pressed with fondness and delight. Poor innocent! early, indeed, didst thou become acquainted with the miseries which arise from the wayward and misguided passions of the human race. Gladly would I have succoured thee, but destiny had otherwise ordained it.

I still gazed upon that innocent child, when the alarm was given of an armed host approaching, and I was compelled to quit the work of mercy, in which I would gladly have engaged, to bestow my powers and vigour on

that of destruction and death. Onward we rushed, and short but furious was the conflict. Every blow given by the Christians dealt death around, while on our tempered armour the swords of the Moslem fell harmless as the lightning which plays over the surface of the polished ice.

Heated and furious by the conflict, rendered desperate by resistance, we bore down every thing before us, till we reached the gate of the city, on the outside of which the work of death was going merrily on.—*There*, a strong and formidable guard opposed our progress.—But *now* we could not retreat, if we had been willing. With despair, therefore, seconding our former efforts, we rushed upon the guard, conscious that every thing depended upon the effort of a moment. That effort was successful– we broke through its combined force–we reached the gate—and while a few kept

the returning Infidels at bay, others swung the huge portals back upon their hinges, and the followers of the Cross rushed like an overwhelming torrent, when the flood-gates are opened, into the centre of the city.

In that fearful and tremendous rush, hundreds were trodden to death; but ere the Christian host had proceeded far, it was met by numbers equal to its own. In myriads the Moslem poured onward from every quarter, and the streets of the Holy City became the scene of the most sanguinary conflict ever witnessed by the eye of man. Hand to hand, and sword to sword, they fought, both parties urged alike by hatred and despair. For long the conflict continued doubtful; till, at length, the Christian powers appeared to triumph.—The Infidels were giving way on every side, notwithstanding the valour of their leaders, and the cool invincible courage of the re-

nowned Saladin himself; and already the Holy City appeared to be in possession of the Christian army—when, behold! the standard of the Cross was torn from the tower of David, the crescent was exalted in its stead, and at the same instant, from the opposite quarter of the town, a cloud of new troops, led by the brother of Saladin, came rushing to his aid. A loud and long shout of joy was raised as they attacked the worn and weary army of the Cross. The combat was fierce—but short. The overwhelming numbers of the Infidel, like a mountain stream darkened by the rain of many days, bore every thing before them, and with resistless fury the Christians were driven beyond the gates—back, even within the entrenchments of their own camp. Their machines of war, constructed for the siege, were taken and destroyed by the rejoicing Infidels, and the approach of night alone prevented the renewal of a combat in the result

of which neither had much to boast of,—for upwards of thirty thousand human beings had that day perished by the sword.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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THE

DOOMED.

'AND BE ALONE ON [illegible], AS I AM NOW!'

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE DOOMED.

CHAPTER I.

"With two triumphant, rolling, murdering eyes, that
Swear at you every time you look upon her."

OTWAY'S ATHEIST.

"SUCH," I exclaimed in the solitary medita-tions of the night, "such are the instruments which the hand of Almighty vengeance employs to inflict punishment upon a rebellious race, who set at nought his laws and despise his authority. Infidels and Christians are alike guilty in his sight, and for wise purposes has the egregious folly of the one been the means

of inflicting a far spread and signal destruction upon both."

I remembered the day when I beheld the Children of Israel fly before Abijah and the men of Judah; and when memory brought the sunset of that fearful day back to view, and I thought of the five hundred thousand Israelites who were left, cold and dead, upon the field, I acknowledged in an audible voice, the mercy of Him who had spared more than a remnant of our host. Long did I meditate upon the extreme madness which had prompted an undertaking, so extravagantly wild as that in which we were now engaged; and, heartsick and weary of every thing, silently did I determine to quit the crusaders and their cause, at the first convenient opportunity that might present itself.

My meditations were interrupted by a slight noise at the entrance of my tent. I started up, for although no fear existed in my breast, I

knew the benefit of ever being upon the alert, and in a state of preparation, during the time of an active warfare. In the present instance it appeared as if my readiness to repel danger had not been misplaced. Near to the door of my tent stood one, whom the faint and glimmering light within enabled me to recognize as clothed in the long and flowing garb of an Ismaelian, or assassin. These Ismaelians owned no sway but that of the Old Man of the Mountains, whose subjects they were. Their ruling principle I knew to be a blind, zealous, and devoted obedience to his commands. The emperor of the East, seated upon his throne, and surrounded by his princes, guards, and satraps, would not have been safe from their attack. Had he, or the greatest potentate that ever breathed, given cause of offence to their all-powerful lord and master, his fiat had but to be issued forth, the object of his vengeance pointed out, and, from the midst of his high

place of security, he would have been dragged, a pale and lifeless corpse, even if the next moment had brought the most cruel death to these ready executioners of their master's will. With unexampled patience they would wait many years for a fitting opportunity to accomplish their revenge—but, at last, it would have been complete.

Instinctively I threw myself in a posture of defence, but the intruder advanced, and dropping the flowing mantle from his shoulders, I beheld, not an Ismaelian, but, underneath the disguise of one, the proud form and unbending features of the haughty Alice. Methought I observed a gleam of satisfaction upon her countenance when she found I had returned unhurt from the conflict. But that gleam vanished as swiftly as the solitary ray of sunshine that darts its beam through the thick clouds of the approaching storm, and then leaves the dreary and deserted wilderness

more sad and lonely than before. She bent her piercing eyes on all around, as if she had been searching the narrow confines of my tent for something she had hoped to find.

"This day," she at length exclaimed, "I observed a silken standard on the tower of David—*Who* placed it there, I need not ask; but where is that standard now?"

"I know not, Lady," was my answer. For in truth, from the moment I had planted it upon the summit of the tower, I had scarce bestowed another thought upon the subject. Instantaneously her cheek and brow flushed to the hue of the deepest crimson.

"*You know not*," she exclaimed, in a voice in which anger and contempt seemed to struggle for the mastery—"*you know not!* and is it thus the standard of the brave Richard is neglected and despised?"

"I know not, Lady"—was my calm reply. "It was left upon the tower of David—and

after our rapid expulsion from the Holy City, I never saw it more. I presume, therefore, it must, with many other equally valuable articles of spoil, have fallen into the hands of the Infidel."

"False and recreant Knight,"—she exclaimed, "and is it thus the standard of the Cross—the work of these hands—is neglected and despised, and you survive to tell the tale? Oh! that I had been a man—but stay—it is not yet too late to redeem your lost honour. Up then—up and be doing. Take with you a chosen few, and, ere the morning light shall dawn, redeem that standard from the Infidel; or," she added, in a lower, but more impressive tone, "leave it in his hands, but let it first be stained with your heart's best blood."

Alas! she little knew to whom she spoke, and how gladly, had it been in my power, I would have obeyed the latter part of her injunction. As it was, I regarded her wild proposal with

unqualified surprise, and, in answer, merely said, " Lady, granting that I could obtain any one fool-hardy enough to follow me in the enterprise you now enjoin, I scarcely think I would peril mine own life and his for the sake of a silken rag!"

The effect of these words upon the haughty Alice was electric. The blood rushed to her temples and her forehead, till she seemed to be in danger of suffocation. She attempted to speak, but she could find no utterance for her words. She clenched her hands—furiously—franticly—and, casting a look upon me, in which a most fearful expression of hatred and revenge seemed to predominate, she rushed from the tent with steps as noiseless, but far more rapid, than those with which she had a few minutes before entered it. I had heard—I had read—of the pangs of disappointed vanity and love. I had experienced somewhat of their effects. But never, in the

long course of my existence, had I witnessed the visible expression of their transition to that of the most bitter and deadly hatred and revenge, so indescribably sudden and complete.

"There will be more of this yet"—I whispered to myself, as the proud form of that haughty being vanished from my sight; for I felt that deep foreboding spirit of evil, which had never deceived me, rise within my breast, and although no being of this earth could effectually harm me, or assail my life, yet the desire to flee from the situation in which I now stood, was doubly increased, and my resolution to accomplish that flight confirmed.

Next morning, at rather a late hour, I was awoke out of a deep slumber by the sounds of music and rejoicing within the camp. An unusual stir and bustle seemed to pervade its whole environs. I rushed hastily forth to ascertain the cause. The glorious luminary

of day shone with a bright and dazzling beauty in the blue sky, and poured down a whole flood of light upon thousands of armed troops, who looked not as if the blood and toil of a recent conflict had dimmed the splendour of their arms, or soiled the richness of their mail. These stood within the entrenchments of our camp; but without, and advancing towards us, with the loud sound of the tambour and drum, and all the wild clangour of oriental music, came a numerous and gallant body of the Turks. They came not, however, in the guise of war, but in the garb of peace. They were not clothed in iron panoply, but in gorgeous silks; and each, at the end of his light spear, bore a white flag, denoting that the object of the embassy was of a pacific nature.

They approached the barriers, and the shouts with which they were received rent the air. With like shouts they were admitted within

their limits, and the lion-hearted Richard, leaving the recesses of his royal tent, himself came forward, followed by an imposing array of knights and nobles in his train.

The brother of Saladin was the leader of that gallant band, and with the instinctive spirit which at once leads one of a bold and daring character, to recognize his brother in renown, he at once, from amidst all the gorgeous splendor by which he was surrounded, singled out Richard, as the King of England.

It was but the work of a moment, to throw himself from the spirited animal he rode, and to kneel before the king. Readily did Richard raise him from the ground, and frankly did he clasp his hand, as, with the warmest greetings from his brother, he restored the accursed flag that had floated, so recently, from the tower of David, and proposed a mutual cessation from arms, and a friendly intercourse for the period of eleven months.

It is not my intention here, to enter into the detail of those transactions which are found, although in many instances mangled and misrepresented, in the page of history.* Suffice it to say, that after the terms proposed had been duly weighed, and preliminary points, some of more, others of less, and many of no consequence, settled, the truce was finally agreed upon for the desired period. Foolish Saladin! to trust in Christian faith, after the numerous examples of broken covenants and violated engagements, that yet lived in the remembrance of thy race!

As for this truce, it is still fresh upon my mind, that it was entered into by the Chris-

* The sapient reader will undoubtedly observe, that the vain historians of time have made a miserable confusion betwixt Acre and Jerusalem, and many wretched mistakes as to the destruction and rebuilding of the latter place.—Ed.

tians without the slightest intention of preserving their faith inviolate for the assigned period, if, during the interval, fresh succours should arrive, or aught chance by which an advantage to their cause might be derived. To do justice, however, to the mightiest of the host, the warlike Richard gave no voice for peace. He spoke with firm and manly eloquence against the truce, and when his voice was overpowered in council, he turned away with a slow step and melancholy countenance to hide himself within his tent. Oh! how unlike the gallant bearing of the brave warrior was that retiring step! Feeble and dispirited, it seemed as if, with the voice of war, hope, and pride, and joy, had alike departed;—as if for Richard there was no more occupation, and his mace might be laid aside as a child's bauble,—his shield and helmet, as vain and empty toys.

The conduct of the gentle Berengera upon

this occasion, so trying to the hot temper and warlike spirit of him she adored, was kind and affectionate in the extreme. She was every thing the most devoted heart could have desired; and, with those gentle attentions, which never fail to impress their kindness upon the heart, she sought to soothe her wayward lord, and withdraw his attention from that only subject which appeared as meat and drink—aye, and love to him. Sometimes she succeeded; for where the mind is naturally of a wild and enthusiastic cast, although it may experience many a dark hour, the most gloomy and desponding is cheered by those occasional rays of light which never fail to disseminate somewhat of their beauty upon all around. Such was Richard's mind—and it had its sun-bursts of gladness and joy; while that of the cold phlegmatic being whom neither joy nor sorrow moves, rests in its own darkness, like the long dreary night

of a polar winter, that has no sun to enlighten its gloom, and no change to gladden its solitary hours.

As for Alice, she was still the same, if that term can be applied to one who was *changeable* as well as impetuous and proud. Her dark eye lightened up when she saw her silken banner restored from the enemy's grasp; and she looked upon the swarthy but glowing countenance of the young Infidel, with that species of unsuppressed admiration which is only compatible with a fierce and ardent temper, but never exists in a pure and sinless mind. The young Turk returned her gaze with evident and equally unsuppressed marks of enthusiasm. It seemed, indeed, as if, animated by the same spirit, these two, alike in mind and manner, had not only been formed for each other, but by intuition had at once discovered this to be the case. Future events, however, led me to believe that in the bosom

of the Infidel youth a brighter spirit of integrity and honour existed, than in the breast of the high-born Christian maid.

The truce being finally agreed upon, the first use made of its leisure hours, on both sides, was for each to bury his dead. These lay scattered far and wide upon the plain, and filled the air with pestilential and noisome vapours. But the cause once removed, the effect was not long in following: the air gradually became purified—the dark, the gloomy Kedron, again resumed its crystal hue; vegetation sprung forth and clothed the earth in its bright and glorious garb; the purple grape was no longer trodden under foot, but allowed to bloom and flourish in its fullest luxuriance; the poisoned sources of the numerous surrounding fountains were cleared out; all nature seemed to smile again, and, with peace, plenty also once more reigned within the camp and city. Oh! mine own land—mine own especial

country—how this worn and weary heart yet doats upon the wild luxuriance of thy beauty. Shall these eyes yet behold the brightness of thy glory, before they close in the sleep of a long and endless night; or, by the rivers of a strange country must I sit down and weep, and hang my harp upon the willows in the midst thereof, till a friendly death shall come to release me from my sorrows?—No, no: this spirit cannot part from its frail tenement, save, Jerusalem, in sight of thee! Yet why should I wish to revisit thee, when the revolution of centuries must have so ruined thy grandeur, and destroyed thy pride, that these dim eyes shall no longer be able to recognize the idol of their more youthful days, nor to look upon the land where, thousands of years ago, this worn spirit first drew the breath of its endless and prolonged existence? Oh! that I could recall that time—that I could recall one fearful act, the commission of which has

embittered every passing hour of thousands of years, and at evening caused the heart-rending cry to burst from my lips, "Would, God, it were morning!"—and in the morning, "Oh! that the night would come!"

Amidst the sounds of mirth that daily filled the camp there was one sad and solitary heart, to which the joys of peace brought no calm. His occupation, his darling occupation was gone, and the lion-hearted Richard became the prey of a deep melancholy that seemed, at last, to dry up the springs of life, and threaten the dissolution of his iron frame. For days together he hid himself within the recesses of his tent, inaccessible to every human being save his favoured minstrel, whose melting strains at times touched him to the heart. When he did appear, a listlessness, totally unlike his usual activity, pervaded every motion. A carelessness of outward show was apparent in his demeanour, and his looks

said more distinctly than words could speak, "Of what use am I here!"

To cure, or rather to divert, this gloomy apathy, it was determined that a tournament should be proclaimed. The consent of Saladin was obtained, and that gallant prince at once agreed that he and his Emirs should join in the mimic war. I stood beside Richard when the trumpets sounded their note of war throughout the tent, and the heralds proclaimed aloud that, on the third day, the tournament should be held. His eye sparkled once more with its wonted animation, his hand instinctively grasped the pummel of his sword, and his whole frame appeared to be reanimated with new vigour. Alas! that the mind of man should thus revel in the idea even of a mimic slaughter. I could not suppress a sigh, when the melancholy thought arose within my heart, that, to deface the fairest work of creation, even man, whom the

Almighty had formed after his own image, was the chief delight of man. "Strange infatuation," I exclaimed—"and is it thus he thinks to do his Maker honour? That glowing countenance and princely form must, in its turn, become the prey of the meanest worm that grovels on the earth; and yet, all thoughtless, reckless of his coming end, he glories, in the vigour of his youth, to raise his hand high in the work of destruction and of death."

The note of preparation rang around, and all was bustle and activity in the Holy City, and in the Christian camp. As for me, I had no preparations to make, and I cared little for the revelry of the approaching scene. In the leisure of our time, my thoughts had reverted to subjects of deeper interest, from which the bustle and toil of active warfare had for a space estranged them; and my mind, although from a far different cause, had become a prey

to somewhat of the same listlessness which consumed that of Richard. The image of my gentle, my beautiful Zehlima was ever present to my imagination, and it was not the empty vanity of a pageant that could divert the stream of sorrow from its time-worn course. No! a higher and nobler excitement was necessary for this. But there were many around me, who had not so deep a cause of abstraction preying upon their hearts, and they panted for the day which they fondly hoped might bring them glory and renown.

That day soon came, and the morning of the tournament arose a bright and splendid one.

With the first beams of the sun, the gay and gallant were on foot. On proud and prancing steeds they scoured the plain, and far and wide the dancing of gay pennons, and the glittering of polished arms, might be seen, as the knights, in their swift career, crossed

and re-crossed each other on the plain. The gaiety of the scene too, was, heightened by the appearance of the veiled but splendid litters in which the ladies of the Moslem court were borne. Loud bursts of martial music accompanied their progress to the scene of action, and, ere long, the whole wide extent of the valley was covered with the brave, the beautiful, the bright, all thronging towards Gethsemane, in the neighbourhood of which the lists had been pitched.

Oh! how different were the sensations with which I now gazed upon that spot, from those with which I had looked upon its sacred garden. *Then*, it bloomed a wilderness of beauty—*then*, it was sacred as the scene of the Redeemer's agony. *Now*, its neighbourhood was peopled by a wild and motley crowd; and, where flowers and shrubs alone had grown, a host of warriors stood.

On one side, in place of the luxuriant

foliage of the East, the green and golden tents of the Moslem proudly reared their heads. On the other, the white tents of the Christians, emblazoned with the cross, shone, emblems of a purity and love that reigned not within them. The silver crescent glittered in the sunny beams, and the proud standard of England hung in heavy folds, scarcely floating upon the air. The scene, teeming as it was with the young—the gay—the beautiful—and the brave, all buoyant with thoughts of gladness, and the brightening anticipations of a joyous hope—all motion and all life—shining with the splendour of royalty and the riches of the earth, resounding with the animating bursts of martial music, that thrilled upon a corresponding chord within every breast—was one of a wildly imposing and heart-stirring kind. I could scarcely fancy it to be the place I had before seen—and I was lost in meditation, while I gazed upon it, when, all of a sudden,

the shrill clarionet and the trumpet sounded, and awoke me from my dream.

I hastened within the barriers, and found the amusements of the day begun. For some time I gazed upon them without finding much interest in the scene, till every dormant feeling in my mind was awoke by seeing Richard and Saladin, themselves, advance to tilt. I bent forward in the eagerness of anticipation, and in so doing, I caught the eye of the haughty Alice, fixed upon me with a cold and distant look. The brother of Saladin stood beside her, and, following the direction of her eye, he looked around and greeted me with a friendly smile. Near them, but more on the side of Alice, I observed one whom I had no remembrance of ever having seen before.—He occasionally mingled in their conversation, but seemed to address his observations more frequently to Alice than to the youthful Turk. I had little time, however, to observe this

group, for the trumpet sounded, and the steeds of the gallant monarchs, as if fired with a portion of their masters' spirit, sprung forward in their fleet career.

At the first encounter, the lance of Richard broke into a thousand splinters against the well-tempered shield of Saladin, while that of the Infidel broke not, but bent almost double as he passed the English king unharmed. Richard selected a new and tougher lance, and again, at full speed, the encountering heroes met. The steed of Saladin startled and swerved aside in its career, and the noble Richard, scorning to take advantage of aught but his own invincible arm, instantly lowered the point of his lance, and checked his barb till it reared and bolted in the wildness of its impatience, yet moved not forward from the spot on which it stood. The whole arena resounded with applause at this gallant conduct, and no voice proclaimed its approval louder

than that of the brother of Saladin. The monarch himself smiled—and, approaching Richard, vowed that he had been conquered more by his courtesy than his arms,—but that, nevertheless, in the spirit of brotherly affection, he would run him another tilt. No sooner had the word passed his lips, than the joyous Richard reined back his powerful steed even to the limits of the barrier, as if he would have thought himself disgraced had he turned his back upon so noble an opponent. In this feat of horsemanship, however, he was outdone by Saladin; for the gallant Turk threw the reins loose upon the neck of his charger, and, by word of mouth alone, effected that which the English monarch had only been able to compel his mettled steed to perform by force of rein and spur. Again the trumpets sounded, and again the monarchs darted to the charge. This time, they met upon a more decisive footing. Quick as lightning, at the

moment of encounter, the emperor changed his point of aim, and Richard's helm was in an instant shorn of its crest and plume. On this advantage, however, Saladin had no time to congratulate himself, for, at the same moment, the well-directed spear of Richard, with resistless force, hurled steed and rider to the ground. Swiftly did Richard spring to aid his vanquished foe, but ere he could reach him, Saladin had disentangled himself from his fallen steed, and stood, sword in hand, ready to receive him. Now the activity of Saladin gave him an advantage. His light armour allowed more free scope for the movement of his limbs, than the ponderous weight of that which Richard wore. The one stood like a tower of strength prepared to receive and resist every attack that could be made against it, while the other became the incessant assailant upon every side, in the vain hope of finding some unguarded point.

Long did this warfare between the two continue, and both became exhausted before either had gained the slightest advantage over the other. The well-directed blows of Richard often, from the activity of Saladin, whistled through empty air, while, on the other hand, the keen sword of the emperor glanced in harmless guise from the well-tempered steel of Richard's armour.—It seemed as if the combat would have no end; but at length the natural impatience of Richard itself effected that which Saladin could never have done.—Irritated and disappointed by the manner in which he was foiled, he collected his whole strength for one fatal, one exterminating blow. He rushed forward—he swung his sword on high—it descended with the rapidity of lightning—but, with the rapidity of lightning Saladin sprung aside, and, from the violence of his own blow, Richard stumbled forward upon the earth.—On the

instant, by a dexterous movement, Saladin slightly struck an upward blow upon the monarch's blade, which darted from his hand, and, whizzing through the air, fell at the distance of many paces from him. Saladin lifted it from the ground—a ponderous weapon, indeed, in comparison with his own—and advancing, gracefully restored it to its owner. Richard, however, had been disarmed; and, by the rules of the tournay, the combat was at an end. Shouts of applause rent the sky, while, with better grace than might have been expected from him, Richard sheathed his sword, and in the fervour of the moment, grasping the hand of Saladin, spoke aloud those unhappy words that in after-days wrought him so much of woe. "By the rood, we know not a warrior more worthy of the hand of our noble cousin, Alice of Anjou. —What say'st thou, Alice, wilt thou wed the Soldan?" These words were spoken in the

light-hearted thoughtlessness of the moment, and were never again thought of by Richard. But they were treasured in the minds of others, and afterwards brought forward to the disadvantage of the monarch.

"Such," I repeated to myself, as this combat ended, "are the amusements of these creatures of a day—such the vain glory upon the acquisition of which they pride and boast themselves."

An universal mélee of the Christians and the Turks now commenced. The two monarchs had retired to their respective tents to disarm, and their place upon the field was now supplied by a hundred knights and warriors on either side. The noise, the confusion of the onset was indescribable—yet still there was much of interest in it, and I bent eagerly forward to watch the progress of one youthful warrior, whose features, methought, I had somewhere seen before, when suddenly a hand

was raised, a blow was struck, and a long sharp-pointed dagger shivered to a thousand atoms upon my breast. Luckily, although intending to take no part in this combat, I had put on a light but highly tempered corslet, beneath the gay mantle which concealed it from view. To this I owed my preservation from a severe and painful wound—for the violence with which that well-directed blow was struck, must have pierced the heart and ended the life of any creature of clay whose breath was in his nostrils.

I turned quickly round to defend myself, but defence was then of no avail: I merely caught a glimpse of the outstretched arm of the unknown being whom I had remarked standing by the side of Alice, and the brother of Saladin. Before, however, I could distinctly mark one feature of his face, that arm was withdrawn with a sharp and hurried motion—that face was convulsed with pain—and

the proud form of the warrior, struck to the heart by the young and generous Turk, who had watched his every motion, fell cold and breathless to the ground. In falling, the disguise which he wore dropt aside, and the peculiar and characterizing mark of an Ismaelian, or Assassin, was disclosed to view. Ere his foul spirit winged its way to another world, to receive the punishment of the deeds he had done in this, he had but strength left to exclaim, as he looked at Alice—

" Lady, I have done my best—man could do no more."

I shall never forget the fiendlike expression of the haughty dame, as the dying Ismaelian uttered these words—I shall never forget the look of abhorrence bestowed upon her by the generous and noble-minded Infidel. Instantly the truth flashed upon my mind—the words she had uttered—" Proud man, think not Alice of Anjou is to be thus despised for ever"—

recurred again to memory, and in the indignation of the moment, I could not help exclaiming, "Woman! is this your doing—what folly or madness could tempt you to assail a life that can have no end while this world lasts, or yonder sun moves in his unwearied course?" They were rash words, and scarcely had they passed my lips ere I regretted they had been uttered. The brother of Saladin gazed upon me as if I had been a madman or a fool. Alice, while she shrunk within herself, could not suppress a look of the most extreme surprise; while those at hand withdrew from me as if *I* had been the contaminated or guilty being. I saw my folly, but, alas! only when too late. All was confusion and dismay—the combat was stopped, hundreds and thousands thronged quickly to the spot; but taking advantage of the moment's space afforded by the retiring of those more immediately in my neighbourhood, I left the scene, and hurrying

from the dead carcass I could have spurned from me with my foot, and that living demon I despised, and could have spat upon, I quickly retreated to the innermost recesses of my own tent, which stood near the centre of the then deserted and solitary Christian camp.

CHAPTER II.

"O ye are welcome, rich merchants,
Good Saylors, welcome unto mee."

OLD BALLAD.

Hamlet. "O Jephtha, Judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!
Polonius. What a treasure had he, my Lord?
Hamlet. Why, one fair daughter and no more,
The which he loved passing well."

SHAKESPEARE.

WORDS lightly or rashly spoken have often an effect we dream not of. By the close of the following day I found myself universally shunned, as if *I* were the only object on earth at which the finger of contempt and scorn could point. Had this been all, it might have been withstood, for I cared little either for the censure or the praise of man. But these marks

of disapprobation were not long confined to such silent demonstrations. Ere many days had elapsed, they exhibited themselves in a manner not to be mistaken. The report that I had entered into a compact with the Evil-one had spread far and wide, and if my unhappy life could have been effectually assailed, its sad career would have terminated then and there. As it was, it appeared sufficiently evident that the Christian camp was no longer a refuge or a place of strength for me. The conviction of this truth was impressed irresistibly upon my mind, and acting upon that conviction I determined forthwith to leave the Crusaders to the prosecution of their own mad enterprise, and once more to cast myself upon the wide waste of this world, alone.

Accordingly, at sun-rise one morning, I walked forth, as I had often been in the habit of doing, without the barriers of the camp. As I passed the last solitary sentinel on his

out-post, I heard him grumble a muttered curse, and in the same breath utter a prayer for protection against idolatry and witchcraft. I heeded him not, but passed slowly on my way till I reached the cover of a thick luxuriant wood, which grew upon the southern extremity of Mount Sion. There I disencumbered myself of my heavy armour, and clothed myself in a palmer's garb, which I had provided for the occasion: I threw aside my sword, and, in its place, assumed a pilgrim's staff, and emerging from the wood at the opposite extremity to that at which I had entered, proceeded with rapid steps in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea.

For many anxious days I toiled along on my sad and weary way. The habitations of the human race I avoided, save when compelled by the wants of nature to solicit a scanty morsel of food for my sustenance. At night I reposed beneath the shade of a

spreading tree, or under the shelter of some time-worn cave. I crossed the plain of Esdraelon, the most fertile of all lands, which, though it lay in one vast solitude before me, was covered with the richest pasture. Here, in long vanished days, the tribes of Issachar had rejoiced in their tents. I had seen the dews of Hermon fall upon them by night, and the glad sun dry them in the morning. But I had also seen this fertile plain covered with the dying and the dead; for it had been the scene of many a bloody conflict, from the earliest of days even to the present hour. There, Barak, descending from Mount Tabor with his ten thousand warriors at his back, had overthrown Sisera, with his chariots of iron, and all those who were gathered with him. There, with the edge of the sword he had cut them off till not a man was left. There, also, Josiah, king of Judah, the good Josiah, who had banished idolatry from the land, fought against Necho, king

of Egypt, and fell beneath the arrows of the foe. Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him, and the lamentations in the valley of Megiddon were great. There Nabuchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, had fought; and there, Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christians and Turks, warriors of every nation under the sun, had shed their blood, and, by it, fertilized the wide plain that now lay in bright and verdant pasture, stretching far as the eye could reach, without the semblance of a living being to disturb the stillness of its repose.

These, and a thousand other remembrances, crowded upon my mind, as I proceeded on my way, while the burning sun of Syria shone, with hot unclouded blaze, upon my temples and my head. For many days the heat was of that close oppressive kind, that weighs upon the spirits till they become dull and heavy, as if a dark cloud rested upon the mind, and obscured from its perception aught that could

lend it one single beam of gladness or joy.

My reflections, it is true, were sad enough, and required no external causes to deepen the gloom of their despondency. The worn and weary traveller, painfully toiling on his way, cannot revel in the same buoyancy of thought and spirit which rejoices him who can sit in the cool fragrance of the summer breeze, and gaze upon the wide expanse of blue waters lying in their calm and endless sleep before him.

Pain, and weariness, and toil, however, are all component parts of the curse which sin has brought upon this ruined earth. Happy are those who can look forward to their termination in the short space of three score years and ten. *They* may endure, because they endure but for a season; but he who has to look forward to the infliction of these miseries till Time shall be no more, has not the consolation of an early resting-place to

look to—the hope of reaching a quiet and peaceful home at last.

As I toiled on my weary way, the fierce glare of the broiling sun gradually became less and less intolerable. The air assumed a more balmy feeling;—cool and fragrant breezes occasionally played through the delicious groves that now rose on every side,—and, as the twilight of evening stole sweetly upon the decline of day, they came loaded with the delightful perfumes of the citron and the orange flowers.

By these signs I knew that I approached the coast, and, ere long, on ascending a gently rising eminence, crowned to its very summit with the most luxuriant fruits and flowers, I beheld the blue waves of the Mediterranean Sea stretching far below my feet. A sweetly soothing feeling stole over my heart, and I lay down to repose my weary limbs and to contemplate the calm beauty of the scene before me.

That tideless sea lay as if no storm could ever come to disturb the loveliness of its repose. There was no waste of sand upon its borders to mark a defined line of separation betwixt it and its own resplendent shores. It lay, as it were, gently reclining upon the green turf, while its scarcely perceptible motion occasionally stirred, but nothing more than gently stirred, the slender stalk of many a sweet flower that bloomed upon its verdant shore;—like a mirror, it reflected from the surface of its polished bosom the blue and cloudless sky above, till it seemed to have caught the traces of its beauty, and he who gazed could scarcely tell which shone from above—which reflected from below.

There is much of beauty in a calm still scene like this; it cannot boast of the wild luxuriance that calls forth bursts of admiration, but it steals gently upon the heart, and soothes and softens every tender feeling within it.

As I gazed upon the broad bosom of the sea, something connected with it, and with the surrounding scenery, reminded me for a moment of those happy hours I had spent upon the banks of the Ganges; and the delusion was heightened by a wild but sweet strain of music that rose and fell upon the stillness of the evening, till it died away in one soft, prolonged, and liquid cadence It seemed to me as if the voices of angels had been mingled with the sweetest music of the earth. A sad but not unpleasing train of thought stole over me as the sounds died away, and unconsciously I dropt into a calm refreshing slumber, from which I awoke not until the beams of the morning sun shone with unusual brightness on my face.

I started hastily from the ground, scarcely recollecting where I was; but the same calm scene of beauty lay before me—the same blue skies hung above me, and the only change

that had come, was that the morning sun bestowed a joyful brightness where the sombre delicacy of the evening shades had formerly prevailed.

Quickly I girded my palmer's dress around me, and resuming my pilgrim's staff, proceeded, with a rapid pace and a revived spirit, to the nearest sea-port town. I cared little to what quarter of the globe I bent my steps. My present anxiety was to place the broad seas betwixt the hosts of the Crusaders and myself. The mad folly I had witnessed weighed upon my mind, and I verily believe the badge of the cross upon the Crusader's habit would at this moment have been as an adder in my sight—as gall and wormwood to my taste.

In the course of two short hours I reached a sea-port town, every trace of which has now vanished from the earth, and its name from the memory of man. I found a goodly bark

upon the point of sailing for Venice, and, soon agreeing with the master for a passage, in a few short hours more, we slowly steered along the coast of that enchanting land of dreams, under the influence of a gentle but favourable breeze. Our course, however, was soon shaped farther to the westward, and gradually the outline of the land, with all its headlands and its capes, became more and more dim, less and less defined. I sat upon the deck till the shades of evening closed around, and I could no longer see even a distant trace of these beautiful and verdant shores. I then retired below, and, when next morning dawned, the blue sky was above, the green sea around, and, in the wide immensity of the ocean, nothing save our own small bark in sight.

"What is man," I exclaimed, "or the son of man, that he should thus venture down upon the great deeps in the workmanship of

his own frail strength? Let but one feeble nail give way, one treacherous bolt start from its place, and the myriads of souls that crowd the recesses of the bark, ere a single prayer can be uttered, or a cry for mercy given, are swept into the depths of an unknown eternity." It is, indeed, an humbling thought, to know by how slight a tenure human existence is maintained. The frail moth, which upon the least touch crumbles into dust, is not more easily destroyed than the strongest and most vigorous of mankind; yet the mariner, proud of his own strength, vain of his own invention, stands upon the deck of his gallant bark, and sees it gladly bound o'er the waters of the deep sea, as if *he* could control the raging of their waves, and, when the tempests arise, look around him and exclaim—"Peace! be still!"

The vessel in which I had embarked was laden with the richest merchandize, and on

board were many of the owners of the cargo. Some of these, intending to sojourn in another land, had brought their families with them, and from stem to stern the gay vessel was crowded as far as accommodation would permit. Of the merchants, many were intent upon nothing but their gain, and the prospect of adding wealth to wealth. "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then—whose shall all these things be?" I whispered to myself, as I gazed in silence upon these. Others *seemed* equally absorbed in the prospect of their gains, but in reality they were not so. I could perceive their love of wealth was divided with, and controlled by, the kindlier affections of the husband and the parent. Of this latter class one attracted my particular attention. He was an aged Jew, and owner of the richest cargo on board. But he had a youthful daughter with him—beautiful as the fabled houris of the East—

artless and innocent as a child—the sole memorial of his lamented Rachel—and on her he gazed with fonder looks than on his treasured gems, and one glance of her dark eye he prized more than the brightest diamonds of his dazzling store. It was beautiful to see the fondness of the old man; and the filial affection—the constant, unwearied kindness of his lovely daughter—might have taught a lesson to the hardest and most unthinking heart.

If it was not in their gentle affections and mutual kindnesses, I know not in what the charm of their society consisted; but, certainly, I associated more with the beautiful Leiah and her aged father than with any other person on board. Day after day found me more and more frequently in their company. Their kindness—alas! they little knew on whom it was bestowed—was soothing to my wounded heart, and gradually relieved the

oppression on my spirits. I began to look around me with something more of hope. I even dreamt, *vain* dream, of sojourning for a space with them when we should reach our place of destination. But foolish are the hopes of man. Their destined port was far, far different from mine—a haven I could never reach, without beating, for many a long and weary day, upon the troubled sea of a stormy and tempestuous life.

Hitheito all had been fair and calm; unclouded skies hung above, gentle breezes wafted us on our way, and every heart rejoiced in the prospect of a safe and speedy termination to our voyage. Already we had passed the entrance to the Gulf of Venice and calculated upon three short days, at farthest, placing us beyond the reach of adverse tides or winds. But the waters are in the hollow of His hand who rides upon the whirlwind, and rules the storm!

On the morning of the second day, the hitherto cloudless skies became dark, lowering, and obscured: the sea was fearfully, tremulously, restlessly agitated, although as yet no breath of wind was stirring. A hot, oppressive, suffocating closeness weighed upon the air, and every thing betokened the approach of a coming storm. Terror was marked upon the countenances of many, yet the careless seaman whistled in thoughtlessness of heart as he went about his duty, and made fitting preparations to withstand, if it might be, the vengeance of Him from whose throne the lightning's flash was never sent in vain.

On it came at last, and the wild and distant whistling of the wind, rising and falling like the moanings of a disturbed spirit, gradually drew more and more near—gradually increased in force, till it blew a gale, the violence of which baffles all description. The sea rose

and swelled, as if seeking to lash itself into resistless fury; the wild breakers dashed over the vessel, and in their progress swept every moveable thing before them. The lightnings flashed from the thick dense clouds that rolled along the sky; the loud thunders roared; and the pale faces of the crew spoke of more danger than the mind was willing to admit or the tongue to confess.

Every stitch of sail was lowered, and we lay tossing at the mercy of the winds and waves. The boiling of the sea around us was fearfully awful and terrific; the creaking of the stretched and labouring vessel smote upon the heart. Sounds of cursing and of prayers arose from the crew, shrieks of despair and agony from the passengers, and these, mingling with the rage of the elements, formed together a chorus too dreadful for the human ear to listen to. Fearfully our vessel hung for a moment toppling upon the high waves, as if

her tall masts would have struck into the clouds above; then, swift as the lightning's flash, down she rolled into the hollow of the sea. Again, she dashed onward on her wild career, as if upon the wings of the wind; and anon she laboured and grew heavy, as if weary of contending with the storm, and determined at last to find peace by yielding to its violence, in despair. An occasional gleam of sunshine, bursting through the thick clouds by which we were surrounded, afforded no room for hope, because it only served to shew the wildness of the storm, and to render its terrors more complete.

For many hours we continued in this situation, till the shades of evening began to close in, when the wind, suddenly chopping round with a furious blast, threw the ship on her beam-ends into the hollow of the sea. A tremendous billow, at the same instant, struck upon her stern, and tore away the

rudder with the violence of the blow. A wild shriek arose, from the depths of that stormy sea, even to the dark clouds that hung above. The ship trembled—her planks creaked and started—and the water poured in on every side. The rich merchandise was thrown overboard;—all hands, without distinction, were set to the work of relieving the vessel from the water that poured in like a rushing stream, and by the most incredible exertions it once more righted, and again *floated*, I can call it nothing more, upon the surface of the agitated ocean.

With unabated fury the tempest continued to rage when the night closed around us. Its darkness added but little to the horrors of our situation, for the light of noon-day had been obscured by the blackness of the clouds that lowered upon the sky, and, except by the increasing violence of the storm, it was scarcely possible to tell when the sun had set. The

leaks in the vessel had been somewhat stopped by the rich bales of silk which had been thrust into them, as if these bales had been nought but the most worthless rags, and by this means we contrived to keep the vessel afloat till the morning-light again dawned.

To one who could, in the midst of the horrors around him, calmly contemplate the countenances of these wealthy merchants when they beheld their rich bales tossed overboard, or made use of to supply the place of the coarsest materials, a strange lesson might have been afforded. With some of them, it were hard to say whether the love of life, or the love of wealth, bore the stronger sway. Others again looked as if they could *sooner* have parted with their life than their wealth. They spoke not, for they knew that words would have been vain. But the expression of their countenance said as plainly as words

could have done, "What is life to us, when all our wealth is gone?"

It was far different with the beautiful Leiah and her aged father. *He* was the owner of the richest store on board, yet he heeded not his valuable packages, he looked not after them, when, one after the other, they were cast into the raging sea. His whole soul seemed to be wrapt up in anxiety for his daughter's safety. "Oh! my Leiah, my child"—were the only words he uttered, while he pressed her despairingly to his heart. He scarcely ever raised his eyes from her face, and he wiped the damp dews and the white foam from her brow, and kissed her pale cheek, as if he looked forward to a parting he could not avoid, and yet wished to protract as long as he possibly could.

It was, indeed, evident that the spirit of the tender and delicate Leiah was fast fleeting to

a brighter world, where no storms could come to disturb the calmness of its repose; yet, even in this extremity, she tried to comfort the heart of her aged parent. She smiled sweetly in his face, and pressed his hand to her heart, and even tried to whisper the words of comfort in his ear. These words died away in the whistling of the storm.

The labouring vessel sunk deeper and deeper into the waste of waters, and it became necessary to cut away our masts in order still more to lighten her. The fore-mast, like a tall and stately tree, when felled by the axe of the forester, was soon cut down; but while we were engaged in the act of doing so, a tremendous blast tore away the main-mast by the deck. I looked around for an instant, as it fell —and in that instant I saw a spar falling right towards the place where the gentle Leiah and her father sat. Quick as thought, I darted to the spot, and reached it just in time to ward off a

blow which, in all probability, would have been fatal to both. The good old man, in the extacy of his feelings, pressed my hand, and the beautiful Leiah thanked me with her calm but expressive smile. I could not help thinking, as I gazed upon her, that she had resigned every hope of safety here, and was looking forward with a calm, steady, composed eye, to another and a better world. Happy are they, methought, who can thus meet death. But while the thought passed through my mind, the sounds of blasphemy burst upon mine ear, and I turned around to smite the wretch who had so harshly dispelled the illusion from my mind. He stood cursing and blaspheming, because a trembling mariner could not obey the orders he had issued. I raised my arm, but the hand of Providence was before me. A huge wave broke over the vessel, and, dashing onward, swept him to eternity, with the half-uttered curse upon his

tongue, and words of blasphemy trembling on his lips. He was the master of the vessel, and when he perished all subordination was at an end.

We were now tossed upon the bosom of the wide sea, without masts and without a rudder. Leak after leak opened in the vessel's sides; every one ordered—no one obeyed—all was confusion and dismay, and no hope of deliverance appeared to exist.

I took my station by the side of Leiah and her father, and when I gazed upon the raging sea around me, and heard the wild thunders roll above, and saw the pale lightning's flash from pole to pole, and looked at the shattered bark in which I stood, a bright and beautiful idea struck me,—that my last hour at length approached. It was a joyful moment! An exclamation of delight burst from my lips—and I clasped my hands and looked upwards in silent and heartfelt prayer. Alas! there was

no such relief for me. The very waves of the ocean would have spurned me from them, and cast me up as a thing they loathed, as a being whose carcase would have polluted the hidden beauties of their depths.

My thoughts were interrupted by a wild—a fearful scream. Methinks, at the distance of hundreds of years, it thrills again upon my ear. I turned round, and, oh! God of heaven, I beheld the last glimpse of a white robe floating upon the surface of a fearful wave. It was Leiah's—that wave had swept her from her father's arms—and now, beyond the reach of aid, she clasped her hands—she looked to heaven, she smiled—sweetly smiled—tried, but in vain, to beckon a last farewell, and disappeared for ever from our view. Again, that wild and fearful shriek burst from her aged father's lips, as, in the madness of the moment, he attempted to throw himself into the raging sea. I caught him in my arms, and held him fast, to

prevent the execution of his purpose. He struggled fiercely to be free, but his strength was as nothing when compared with mine. In the agony of despair, he tried to smite me; and threatened me with a fearful revenge. I heeded him not;—I held him fast within my arms, till the violence of his own struggles exhausted him, and then he sunk down, harmless as a child, and totally devoid of energy and power.

I gazed upon the bereaved father for a moment, and my heart bled within me when I beheld the silent agony of his grief. "There are others," I exclaimed, "as wretched as myself. The shortest life is full of misery." But the thought brought no consolation to my heart, for with me the time was long past when the knowledge that others partook of like sorrow with myself could ease the weight of mine. Again I approached the unhappy man, and, stooping down, looked earnestly in his

face. I would have spoken the words of consolation to him, but they trembled on my lips. I believe that, even then, exhausted nature had given up the struggle—and that he was *dead.* His face was pale, rigidly pale, and his eyes fixed and glassy; but I had no time to ascertain the fact. That look was the last I ever cast on him, or on any of the crew. At the moment I was stretching forth my hand, to feel whether his heart still beat, the vessel reeled—trembled—shook as if agitated by some violent emotion—then, for a minute's space, stood motionless and still, and immediately afterwards, with one wild plunge, sunk headlong into the depths below.

A fearful, half suffocated yell arose from the drowning crew, as they were dragged down in the whirling vortex occasioned by the sinking of the vessel. I, too, sunk, and it seemed to me as if in the uttermost depths of that troubled sea, rainbow-coloured things and brightly

branching corals grew. But I quickly arose again from the depths of beauty, and when once more I floated upon the surface of the waters, there was no living being near me—no trace left to tell that a goodly ship had so recently been there. Strange to say, when death approached, I felt a natural instinct, to preserve my wretched being, strong within me, and I, who had so often desired to be released from the toils and troubles of a weary existence, now bent my breast against the waves, and swam stoutly for my life. I feared some drowning wretch might seize upon me, and, in the convulsive grasp of death, drag me to the bottom with him—and what I anticipated soon happened. I felt my limbs suddenly seized with the strong grasp of agony and despair—I struggled—fiercely struggled—but I could not rid me of the drowning man. He was beneath the waters, and I saw him not, yet he was gradually sinking, and I felt that I too

was sinking with him. The winds still roared, and the breakers dashed around, and the waves were boiling with a tempest's fury, but the wild despairing cry I uttered, as with one violent effort I tried to free myself from that deadly grasp, rose far above the loudness of the storm. That effort was unsuccessful—the drowning wretch still clung fiercely to me. In the retiring of a huge wave, his head for an instant appeared above the surface of the raging sea. He gasped for breath, and his eyes glared fearfully on me.—I took advantage of that moment, and collecting all my strength, I smote him furiously on the head. He relaxed his hold—he cast on me an upbraiding look—he closed his eyes, and, in utter wretchedness and despair, sunk for ever beneath the overwhelming wave. Those wildly glazed eyes are still fixed on me. In the darkness of the night I see them glaring fearfully,—and that upbraiding look of horror and despair—that

dying look of a sinful wretch whom I had hastened to eternity, haunts me in my waking hours—in my sleeping moments—where'er I turn myself, and where'er I go.

Now, however, with strange inconsistency, I revelled in my fancied freedom, and thought that life was still my own. Scarcely, however, had I time to frame this passing thought, when a furious breaker struck me on the breast. I sunk beneath its force, and almost instantaneously lost all sensation of existence. The last sound I heard was a confused buzzing noise, as of the distant rushing of many waters, and then it seemed as if, all at once, I sunk into a deep and heavy slumber.

How long I remained in this situation, I cannot tell. When I again awoke to a sense of being and existence, I found myself lying high upon a sandy beach, and clasping in my arms the broken fragments of a mast. I imagine that fragment had been accidentally floating

near me, and in the last effort of expiring nature, I had caught it in my grasp, and clung to it till I had been cast ashore. There, however, I must have lain for some time, for the winds had died away, and the sea lay calm and still. Now and then, indeed, a heavy swell rolled with a slow and troubled motion towards the shore, speaking of a past storm; but nothing more remained to tell of the tempest that had so lately raged.

The warm sun shone brightly, and his cheering beams invigorated me with new life; nevertheless, I was weak—feeble and dispirited still—and, when I attempted to rise, I fell again prostrate upon the earth. For some hours I lay there, till my strength was in a slight degree restored, and then I slowly crawled from the beach, till I reached a sparkling fountain, of the cool waters of which I drank a long delicious draught, that refreshed my parched throat, and moistened my cracked

and broken lips. At no great distance from me, a grove of orange trees, bending beneath the pressure of their golden fruit, appeared. Joyously I approached and shook it from the branches, and as it rolled around me I caught it with a maniac's glee, and drained the rich juice into my throat. Never, methought, had I before known fruit so exquisitely grateful or palateable to the taste. Rich purple grapes, too, grew in wild luxuriance there, and the spot on which I had thus been cast appeared a paradise of beauty—a rich, but lonely, garden on the surface of the earth.

Gay beauteous birds, with bright and sparkling plumage, flew around; and they were not afraid of the destroying hand of man, for when I approached them they sought not to fly away, but fearlessly suffered me to touch them, and admire their beauty. It was evident

no human foot had ever trode this sacred place of retirement and repose. No human habitation was within sight, and when, in the course of a few days, I climbed to the top of a neighbouring hill, covered, from its base to its summit, with the most rich and verdant turf, I beheld the wide sea on one hand—a land of beauty on the other—but no sign or trace of a human being, whose presence might disturb the endless calm of that beauteous land of peace.

"Now I have found my wish," I exclaimed, in the momentary extacy of a delighted feeling—"here I shall remain; here, a lonely and a solitary being, I shall linger out the remainder of my long existence, far from the haunts of men—where no hand can come to wound, no tongue to revile me;—nothing to disturb my calm repose."

I was, indeed, sick of the world. Its love

and its hatred were alike lost to me—its contempt and scorn I heeded not—its affection I could not prize. I wished to be no longer a *wanderer* upon the earth. I wished to have some spot that I could call *my home*. Crowded cities I loathed with a perfect hatred; the society of man I abhorred. I had no feeling in common with any son of the human race—and the thought, that I must again haunt with them, would have come with horror to my mind.

Seriously, therefore, did I now set myself to work; and, in the midst of this little paradise, I soon reared myself a dwelling. There, surrounded by the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, I lived a hermit's life. They were my companions—they were my friends—and save when, in the midst of the Indian forest, I had passed that brief but bright period of existence, to the memory of

which my heart ever turns with the fond yearnings of affection, I remember no time, when I experienced so much of calm, undisturbed tranquillity, and repose.

CHAPTER III.

"Resume the past—and, once again,
Unite the links of memory's broken chain."

ANON.

"Upon my heart thy accents sweet,
Of peace and pity, fell like dew
On flowers half dead."

SHELLEY.

I AM now come to a period, when I must pass over the narrative of many long years. During the greater part of that time, my generally eventful life was marked by little change in its monotonous course. Day after day, I saw the morning sun arise beyond the range of a chain of distant mountains; night after night,

I watched him set in the deep waters of the blue sea, and still my occupations were the same. Yet I was far from unhappy. Sooner or later, the irresistible force of habit will reconcile every human being to his fate, and I believe if I had been suddenly transplanted once more into the busy haunts of men, I would have been an infinitely more wretched and unhappy being than when reigning *alone* in the absolute sovereignty of mine own romantic isle.

It is true, no doubt, that man was born to be a social creature. But let his mind once acquire a taste for solitude—let the habits of his life be those of the strictest and most unvaried seclusion—let him live, as, at this period, I did,—far from all that could disturb his thoughts or wreck his peace,—and he will be a more happy, and a more contented being, than when subjected to those evils which infest society—and that simply because he is placed

beyond the reach of envy, backbiting, malice, slander, and all those many ills which the heart of the wicked revels in, and delights to inflict upon his fellow man.

But this was not to last for ever. *For ever*, indeed, it would have been to any mere created man, even had his lifetime been lengthened out to many duplications of its ordinary days: —to me, however, this long space of years appeared as but short, when the tranquillity of my retirement was fearfully disturbed, and I was forced to quit that calm retreat, wherein I had sought, as it were, to hide my head for ever.

I need not now recite the melancholy and heart-rending event which forced me to quit my peaceful home. The bare recollection of it harrows up my soul, and the attempt, calmly and deliberately, to commit the details of it to paper, would congeal my blood with horror and dismay. The very thought un-

mans me—my hand trembles, and I can scarcely hold the pen. Away—horrible, accursed vision—fearful dream, avaunt!

Suffice it to say, that, after the lapse of the period I have alluded to, I found myself, one beautiful enlivening morning, early in October, in the neighbourhood of the small town of Nami, in Italy. The blue refulgent sky shone above, and the earth slept beautifully below. I was journeying towards Rome, the capital of the Christian world—the ancient seat of learning and the arts.

As I left Nami, I gazed with a strange and mixed emotion, upon the splendid ruins of the magnificent bridge erected by the Emperor Augustus. It had been built many a century after my day, and I doubt not its founders had reckoned it would stand till the world was destroyed. But, I—a human being—had outlived it, and, while no symptom of impaired strength was visible on my frame, I was

mouldering in ruins and decay. So pass away and perish the most durable monuments of man.

On the following day I crossed the Tyber, by the ancient Roman bridge which divides Umbria from Sabina. I trode forward through a long, and apparently interminable, succession of olive groves,—but, towards the evening, as I advanced farther on my way, a rich and fertile country laden with vineyards, and abounding in corn, opened to my view. Through this delightful country I passed, meditating upon the goodness of that Providence which bestowed so much of its bounty upon a sinful and rebellious race; till, upon a sudden, after a gentle ascent of many hours, I stood upon the margin of the frightful abyss of Triglia. So unexpected was the appearance of the wild ravine, that I started back with an exclamation of horror

and surprise. But the shades of evening were closing in—the sun was setting—and so beautifully variegated was the sombre light upon the ravine, and its surrounding scenery, that my next exclamation was one of admiration and delight.

"Beware!" exclaimed a voice, as, in the extacy of the moment, I approached nearer to the margin of the precipice than prudence warranted. The warning was nearly too late—the tottering stone, on which I stood, gave way and plunged, with a fearfully sullen sound, into the impenetrable depths of the abyss below. I was in the act of being precipitated headlong with it, when, fortunately, I caught hold of the projecting branch of a cedar-tree that shot from amidst the surrounding rocks and stones.

Instantaneously I felt my arm seized by a strong and muscular hand, and, ere I had

time even to think of the horrors of my situation, I again stood in safety several feet from the margin of the precipice.

My preserver stood before me—a young, active, and elegant looking man. He addressed me in the language of politeness. He was evidently a foreigner; so was I, but I had seen more of the world than he had, and most countries had become alike to me. I discovered him to be an Englishman, for there is something peculiar—something naturally frank, bold, and commanding in the manners of the high-born of that nation, which never can deceive. I thanked him—heartily thanked him for the service he had done me; but he talked lightly of it, and assured me it was nothing. One short spring—the slightest exertion of my own, he said, would at once have released me from danger. I knew this to be the way of the English. When one of

that peculiar nation confers a favour, he universally under-rates the service he has done. With almost every other people under the sun, he who has done, or is about to do, a service, extols the extent of his own merit, till he, upon whom the favour has been conferred, sinks under a sense of the enormity of his obligation ;—he, upon whom it is intended to be conferred, shrinks from incurring so great a responsibility of gratitude. I remember a small occurrence which illustrates this principle well.—In the raging of an unexpected storm, I once beheld an Englishman offer the shelter of his great coat to a hapless traveller who, unfortunately, was exposed to its fury. "Take it," he exclaimed, "it is useless to me—I don't require it." Similarly situated I had seen a Frenchman. He too, it is true, offered the benefit of his garment; but in doing so, he expatiated long and loudly upon its warmth

—its usefulness—*and the shelter it afforded to himself.*"

The kindness of my preserver, however, did not stop here. He saw that I was weary and travel-soiled, and he spoke of the approaching night, of the danger of banditti, and pressed me to accompany him to Castellana, where, with his father and his sisters, he had rested on their way to Rome. I required little solicitation to induce me to accept so kind an offer, and, joining my new friend, we descended the sloping hill together, and in a short space of time arrived in the vicinity of Castellana.

"Here," exclaimed my companion, "the ancient city of Veii stood—that fair city of which no traces now remain." I looked around me, and beheld Castellana perched upon its bold rock, and I knew that it must be the site of the ancient Veii, which, like a second Troy, had, at an advanced period of

Roman History, stood a siege of ten destructive years, and not that of Falerium, as some writers have supposed. We sought to discover some remains of the ancient city, but in vain, for the destroying hand of Time had obliterated every trace of it.

While engaged in this occupation, the sound of voices broke upon the stillness of the evening. I looked up, and, through a long valley of olive-trees, beheld an elderly gentleman, supporting a youthful female upon either arm. They laughed, and the spirit of joy seemed to have taken up his abode in their hearts. They advanced towards the spot where we stood, and my companion darted forward to meet them. Kind and affectionate was his hurried greeting; he spoke a few words to them, and then returning to the place where I still remained, he took me by the arm and introduced me to his father, as Mr. Din-

widdie—to his sisters as Ellen and Mary. Strictly speaking, I should have said Mary and Ellen—for Mary was the elder by a year or two, but the remembrance of Ellen is uppermost in my mind.

I was received by the good old man with almost paternal kindness;—by his daughters, with that frank cordiality which characterises open and confiding hearts. I was invited to partake of their hospitality—to accompany them to Rome—and, accepting their invitation in the same spirit in which it had been given, I joined their party, and the evening being now far advanced, we forthwith proceeded on our way to their abode.

As we slowly moved along, I had leisure to observe the appearance of the new friends amongst whom I had thus unexpectedly been thrown. The father was somewhat above the middle age; his habit was that of a clergyman; his countenance, though sometimes

marked with a slight tinge of seriousness, I had almost said of serious mirth, was open, expressive, and benevolent. In after days, I found it was but the index to his heart, the open and benevolent disposition of which, in many instances, exposed his kindness to imposition and deceit. Mary was somewhat above the middle size, and her features were regularly beautiful and commanding. Her dark hair shone upon a forehead white as snow, and her bright eyes only lost a portion of their piercing qualities in consequence of the glowing kindness with which they for ever beamed. Ellen was somewhat less in stature than her sister, and in appearance a perfect contrast to her. Equally beautiful indeed she was—in my eyes more than equally beautiful, but her beauty was of a totally different character. Her form was slight, but elegantly turned, and I believe the statuary would in vain have sought to find a fault in

it. There was, perhaps, no decidedly marked or perfect feature in her face, but, altogether blended, they shone with a glowing sweetness and beauty that nothing could surpass. Sometimes her cheek was pale as marble, with a slight and scarcely perceptible tinge of life in it. At other times it glowed with a bright and beauteous animation, while her dove-like eyes shone with a sweetness of expression that conveyed the idea to the beholder, that nothing, save the peaceful thoughts of a calm and contented heart, could beam forth there. Her luxuriant sunny hair matched well with the hazel colour of her eyes, and hung in many a clustering ringlet round her fair face.—In short, had a master of his art wished to pourtray an angel of mercy, smiling in the discharge of a blissful errand, he could not have assumed a more perfect model, in form and face, than that upon which I now gazed. I have been thus minute in my description of

Ellen Dinwiddie, because she had a strong influence over many years of my future life, and in after times became deeply connected with my unhappy fate.

While making these observations, I had insensibly fallen into a train of thought, from which I was roused by Edward Dinwiddie, my young preserver, touching me on the shoulder. "Give her your arm," he exclaimed, as one of his sisters slightly stumbled on a small stone that lay unobserved in her path. For a moment I could not divine his meaning. "Give her your arm," was an exclamation new to me. It was long since I had been upon that familiar footing with any being of the human race.—Long!—I had never been—for, in those countries in which the greater part of my life had been passed, this mode of assistance and support formed no part of the code of politeness or of duty. Thus he who should live on to eternity will

ever find that he has somewhat still to learn. I sprung forward, however, for I saw that something was expected of me, and I remembered how Ellen and Mary clung to their father when I first beheld them—I sprung forward, and held out my hand to Ellen. But it was Mary who had stumbled. The former, however, laughingly exclaimed, while she accepted my proffered aid—"It may be my turn next, and it is better, you know, Mary, to *prevent* danger than to cure its effects!"

These are slight, perhaps trifling incidents; yet how often does it happen that from such the most serious consequences arise. No one can tell how deeply the most trifling action may affect his future life, and as little can the most experienced of us know how slight the effects of seriously pondered deeds may ultimately be.

We had now reached our temporary abode at Castellana, and after a slight refreshment

of dried fruits and delicious grapes, we parted for the night.

In the quiet hours of repose, I thought of the sudden change which had again thrown me loose upon the world. My heart sunk within me while I retraced some of those sad passages of my life, the memory of which sunk with bitterness on my soul. I looked forward with a melancholy glance to the future, when like events might again occur; and the cold hand of despair pressed its .eaden weight upon me when the thought of my long interminable existence stared like a spectre in my face, accompanied with the sad certainty, the reality of which I had so often experienced, that that future could not but be marked with many a severe and painful trial. It was no comfort to me to know that, let the worst come, I had deserved it all; yet amidst the agony of these thoughts I could not help acknowledging the goodness of Providence,

which had so frequently thrown me into the society of those whose kindness and affection had blessed many a solitary hour, and brightened many a portion of the far-spread desert of my existence.—Once more this seemed to be my fate.—Again I appeared to be blessed with the friendship of the amiable and the good.

In the still hours of the night, I dreamt not of the fair Ellen: but I thought of her light-hearted mirth, her innocent gaiety and gladness, the calmness of her more serious moments, the kindness which shone so conspicuously in every word and action, till insensibly I dropt asleep, and lay in a profound and refreshing slumber till the beams of the morning sun, darting through the vines by which the latticed casement of my chamber was surrounded, awoke me from my sleep.

So deep had my slumbers been, that, for a

few moments, I scarcely remembered where I was.—Recollection, however, soon returned, and hastily clothing myself with a new garb, which the kindness of my friend had prepared for me, I left my apartment and joined the family circle already assembled in the room we had quitted on the preceding night. The glancing sun shone into the apartment, but more than half-obscured by the clusters of sweetly-scented flowers that clung around the window, and perfumed the whole air with the fragrance of their breath. I was at once greeted by all, as one who had been a friend for many days, and laughing praises were bestowed on the improved appearance of my exterior.

I had, indeed, been weary and travel-soiled on the preceding evening, but I now stood before them a refreshed and different being.

"Have a care, my girls, of your hearts!"

exclaimed the delighted father, as he cast a glance of affection, not unmingled with pride, upon his lovely daughters.

"Mine is fenced in armour of proof;" said Mary, smiling, as she looked at her more timid and retiring sister. Ellen spoke not—but Edward exclaimed aloud—"Let not him that buckleth on his armour boast as he who taketh it off! Those coal-black eyes, perchance, may pierce your boasted armour through—and what then, mine amiable sister, is to protect your little heart?"

More the rattling youth would have said—for he had begun some remark on the exquisite taste of a garb made according to his own directions—had he not been interrupted by his worthy father, who mildly reprimanded him for his irreverent use of the words of holy writ. I ventured to agree in the justice of that reprimand, and the old man pressed my hand with a kindly feeling, while drawing

from its case a splendidly-illuminated Bible, he proceeded, before the commencement of our morning meal, to read a small portion of the sacred volume. This done, he prayed, fervently and eloquently prayed, and his earnest supplications for forgiveness of our sins, and grace to guide us through an evil world, rose, I will venture to say, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to the throne of God. Morning and evening, this united tribute of thanksgiving and of prayer was repeated, with this difference, that, in the evening, our family worship was concluded with a hymn, in the sacred melody of which we all joined. Often have I listened to the full rich tones of Ellen's voice, ascending in a stream of music from her heart, till mine melted within me, and my eyes were filled with tears. —There was much of pure devotion dwelt in her mind, and in very singleness of heart she praised God.

Thus did this amiable family seek, by gradually withdrawing their first and fondest thoughts from earth, to lessen the weight of those evils which are, more or less, the lot of every human being, and to prepare themselves patiently to await and receive every change their heavenly Father, in the dispensations of his providence, might please to award them.—Much cause had they for thankfulness at present. They had left their own country in search of a more genial clime to recruit the fading strength and feeble frame of their beloved Ellen, upon whose cheek consumption had already traced its bright, but most deceiving hue. Italy, however, had done much—the smiling enemy had been subdued, and his destined victim already exulted in the glad consciousness of returning health and strength.

Our devotions and our morning meal concluded, we prepared to journey on our way.

As we advanced towards the Eternal City, those beautiful signs of cultivation in which we had revelled, gradually disappeared. A few solitary trees were scattered here and there, but they boasted none of that luxuriant foliage which I had been so much accustomed to behold. They drooped and faded, like so many exiles in a foreign land. A wild and general desolation reigned around. We saw no inhabited villages in the neighbourhood of Rome—no herds of cattle grazing upon rich pastures—for the rank grass that sprung from amidst the ruins of a hundred tombs and the broken masses of many an ancient aqueduct, would scarce have afforded sustenance for a single animal.—It appeared to be the land of sorrow and of gloom, deserted by those who once lived and flourished there; as if no one could now venture to cultivate the crumbling soil of empires, or inhabit that spot which had once been ruled by the masters of the world.

Yet, amidst all this desolation, these ruined remains of magnificence and splendour had an imposing effect. No one could look upon them, and think what Rome had been, without experiencing the most sad and melancholy emotions.—The heart sank, and the spirits saddened before these proofs of the rapid decay of all human grandeur. Here the conquerors of the world—the disposers of provinces and kingdoms—had reigned, the Cæsars had revelled in their glory; and *now* ———. The contrast was too striking—I felt a tear starting to my eye, but I was ashamed of my weakness—for what were the remains of human grandeur to me, who had witnessed the rise and fall of thousands of empires, and knew that the best attempts of man could but raise to himself the name—the record of a day.

I turned aside to brush that tear from view, and I caught the soft, mild eyes of Ellen, fixed

upon me with a calm, and, methought, somewhat of an affectionate expression.—I might, however, be mistaken, for they were instantly withdrawn and cast upon the ground, as, with a slight tinge of melancholy in her tone, she remarked—"Who would wish for a prolonged existence, when it could only serve the sad purpose of enabling him to witness the decay of even the most durable monuments of human art?"

I started, and bent my dark eyes upon her as if I would have searched the innermost recesses of her soul. She met my piercing look unmoved. There was no guilt in her innocent thoughts, that she should shrink before the gaze of any created being. "True," I exclaimed, as I turned my head aside, "and yet you have but pictured to the fancy the most trifling portion of that evil which attends the curse of a protracted life. Oh! Ellen, what think you of the fondest ties of existence

being severed, one by one, without the consolation remaining to the sufferer, that he can ever hope to escape the renewed sorrow of these melancholy bereavements? Of wife—children—parent s brothers—friends—all whom he held dear upon earth, departing from this scene of woe, and descending into the dark and gloomy grave before him—of every silver cord of life being snapped—its golden bowl broken—while the worn thread of his existence remains uncut, and, day by day, he totters to the grave after the cold remains of some fondly cherished being, till at last he is left *alone*—utterly—hopelessly *alone*—in the wide waste of this dreary, and, to him, deserted world!"

In an agony of grief I buried my face within my hands, as if to hide from view the vision I had conjured from the depths in which it slumbered. A soft hand touched mine, and with-

drew them from my eyes, as Ellen's voice gently answered,—" I meant not to raise such melancholy thoughts; but could one be placed in the situation you have pictured, I would say to the wretched sufferer, look to the cross of Christ—there you will find consolation under every bereavement—there you will find a balm for your wounded spirit, a sure refuge from every sorrow and from every woe."

I looked upon her who thus spoke the words of peace: her soft eyes were lighted up with an animated splendor, her cheek glowed brightly with emotion, and every thought, for the moment, seemed to be elevated far above earth and earthly things.

" But, Ellen," I asked enquiringly, " what if the unhappy sufferer should bear about with him the constantly corroding pangs of an undying remorse, for a weight of unpardoned sin and guilt—the consciousness of being an out-

cast from the presence of his God, and heaven—the excruciating sense of an utterly lost and ruined state?"

"Still"—she exclaimed with enthusiasm—"still I would bid him look to the cross of Christ—I would bid him go there for light to dissipate the darkness of his remorse, for pardon to remove the weight of his sin and guilt, for hope to restore him to the presence of his God and heaven, for comfort to remove the sense of his lost and ruined state."

"And can *I* go there?" I exclaimed, catching a portion of her enthusiasm. She looked at me for a moment—something resembling a sad surprise seemed to dwell upon her lovely countenance. "Yes!" was her short but decided answer, as she hastened to join her father and her sister, who were somewhat in advance.

At present I felt but little disposed to enter into conversation, and therefore followed

slowly in the rear. A new world of thought was opened to my mind. Many beautiful ideas floated in a long perspective before me, but as yet they had assumed no distinct or tangible form. I had, indeed, heard of a Saviour—I had witnessed his sufferings, I had seen him elevated upon the accursed tree, but the sight had failed to move my stubborn heart, and all that I had heard of the excellence of his atonement, had glanced across it like the bright and glorious flashings of the lightning upon a cold and icy sea.

It is true, that, at one period of my life, I had felt, or rather imagined I had felt, within the very innermost recesses of my heart, the efficacy of His atonement, and revelled in the extacy of delight occasioned by the feeling. But it was a momentary and a passing ray; shining in the splendor of a borrowed light, and raised within my heart by the combination of external causes, and the appearance

of external scenes. When the causes had been removed, the effect too had passed away; for such feelings, at the period to which I allude—and the reader will not, perchance, as yet, have allowed it to pass entirely from his mind—had no abiding city or place of refuge in my breast. They were but the result of an overheated imagination, and had not been engendered by that spirit of self-application, which is necessary to their producing the lasting fruits of repentance and faith. Now, however, as if by accident, the truth had been spoken with more immediate application to my own unhappy fate. Its brightness dawned upon the dark sorrows of my heart, and a glad, but even as yet an evanescent and flickering light, that boasted of no steady gleam, seemed to promise, that at length, a day of sunshine and bliss would arise, to dispel the clouds that had so long dimmed the prospects

of my life, and shaded their sunny hues with the darkness of an endless night.

These thoughts were passing through my mind, when the loud exclamation of Edward Dinwiddie attracted my attention. I looked up and beheld him upon the summit of a gently rising eminence before me. He clapped his hands, and he shouted "Rome, Rome!" in an extacy of joy. We pushed forward to reach that height, each striving who should gain the first view of the Eternal City. Long before the eminence was surmounted, I had reached the party, and was again close by Ellen's side.

"From that hill," she exclaimed immediately, without adverting to our former conversations, "we shall gain the first view of Rome. Oh! how I long to see it." Her wish was soon gratified. Excellent being! oh, that every wish of her pure heart had been as easily attained! In a few minutes, the glorious city burst upon our view. Far before us the

gorgeous cupola of St. Peter's was lost among the clouds. Like the bright diadem that crowns a monarch's head, it seemed to look down upon the whole range of the city spread beneath. The plain of Latium was there, and the distant windings of the Tiber broke beautifully upon our sight.

No one to whom the scene was new, could look upon it without emotion. In that flood a Cæsar and a Cassius had swam. They had dashed its angry billows away, and gallantly bore them through its waters till the tired, though lately boasting Cæsar had been compelled to solicit the aid of friendship to preserve his life. Within those walls the conquerors of the world had sat and issued forth their mandates to a hundred obedient states and kingdoms. Such were the ideas that first presented themselves to the mind of Edward Dinwiddie.

"From that small speck upon the globe,"

said Mary, "the most enchanting, the most beautiful of the arts and sciences were disseminated throughout the barbarous nations of the world to enlighten their gloom, and dispel the darkness of their ignorance."

"And in that city," added the gentle voice of Ellen, while her beautiful eyes were filled with tears, "the blessed Apostle of our holy religion fearlessly spoke those truths that have since dawned with a light so beautiful and pure, that a world slumbering in ignorance and sin, has been awoke to a sense of its lost condition, and a simultaneous knowledge of the pardon of its guilt."

These few words told the sentiments of the speakers well. Ellen's was the religion of the heart. God was in all her thoughts. This I had already more than once observed; and I had seen (shall I acknowledge it?) *with pain*, that every wish, every thought of her pure mind was brought under subservience to His

will, and the dictates of His law. With Mary, it was otherwise. Her's was the religion of poetry. A bright scene—a beautiful flower—the calm stillness of a summer day—any thing that spoke through the external senses to the feelings of an innocent heart, raised her every thought in gratitude from earth to heaven. But the *home* of Ellen's heart was on high—and she looked down from heaven to earth, to gaze upon all its splendour, and the brightness of its glory, although these could give no thought of fadeless beauty to a heart already filled with the anticipated glories of a brighter and a better world.

In my breast, the first sight of Rome stirred up no such emotions, either of admiration or of awe. It was as nought to me, for I had seen that, before which all the borrowed splendour of this world faded like snow in the rays of the bright sun. Such emotions ever

are, and *must* be, the effect of association. But to him who had watched Jerusalem in her glory, and who had witnessed within her walls, scenes which no length of time could efface from the tablets of memory, Rome could be connected with no associations to awaken any such extraordinary emotions, nor could it boast the same sacred and imposing beauty in his sight.

CHAPTER IV.

"What's life without a friend?"

THE DISTRESSED MOTHER.

"Alas! dread Sir, force me not to declare;
The name would wound your sacred breast to hear."

ALCIBIADES.

On approaching Rome we crossed the Tiber at the Pons Milvius, the scene of the most brilliant victory that the annals of time can boast. It was not the victory of one nation over another—it was not the many conquered by the few—it was not the defeat of tyranny and oppression merely,—it was not the bright spirit of patriotism rising to

resist the slavery of its country;—it was the proud triumph of Christianity over the dark superstitions of the heathen, when the great Constantine overthrew the Pagan exulting in his strength and might.

We entered the city by the Porta del Popolo, then but recently erected, by the since justly celebrated Michael Angelo. We paused a moment to survey its beauties, and, had nothing else been in view, the grandeur of its design, and the justness of its proportions, alone would have told us that we approached the capital of the world. The warm tints of the setting sun, thrown brightly upon it, added much to the general effect of its beauty and the imposing character of its architecture. Edward Dinwiddie took a rapid sketch of it in his note book; but with the same inconsistency which marked most of his light-hearted movements, he introduced, in caricature, the whole group of his admiring

friends, beside the really well executed sketch of this ornament of architecture.

Although we would fain have lingered on our way, to admire the beauties of the church of the Madona del Popolo, and other buildings of an imposing appearance, which we passed in the course of our progress, the lateness of the hour forbade us doing so, and we hurried forward to our residence. It was a spacious house in one of the principal squares of the city, which had been secured for the party by the kindness of a friend. Here we found repose and rest, after a day's journey of no ordinary length. Yet, notwithstanding the fatigue we had undergone, the whole party were delighted with their journey, and at night we separated amidst anxious regrets, that so bright a day should have a close.

" Alas !" exclaimed I, when I found myself in the solitude of my chamber, how strange it

is that beings so formed for the enjoyment of a better world, should regret the termination of a day in this. Oh! that every day would pass on the wings of the morning, would vanish like a dream, till that bright sun shall arise which no cloud can shadow—no tempest darken or overcast. Then shall this weary frame find rest, the agony of this tortured mine be over—and, through the mercy of my God, the punishment of unpardoned sin be at an end."

In recalling the thoughts, which, at this period, passed through my mind, I cannot recollect that I had any distinct idea of the bliss to be bestowed, or the punishment inflicted, in a future world. My only desire was to escape from the punishment of *this*; and, when a busy memory pressed upon my mind, that, even while the world lasted, I could not effect this consummation, I groaned in agony

of spirit, and trembled with an emotion so violent, as to shake the feeble frame-work of the couch on which I lay.

I had buried my face in my hands, and heard not the approach of footsteps, till Edward Dinwiddie stood beside me, and in a kind and friendly tone enquired if I were ill. He had listened to the groans of a wounded spirit, and the kindness of his heart had at once prompted him to offer the only relief in his power. The light he held in his hand shone full on my face, and its haggard appearance for a moment seemed to alarm him. That appearance arose not from bodily illness, nor even from any mental malady to which he could afford a cure. It was the expression of a heart sinking under the pangs of a corroding remorse, strongly marked upon the only index the heart can ever have—the countenance of the sufferer. Alas! how many have read this index without under-

standing one single letter traced upon its surface. The faded cheek, the sunk and hollow eye, have been looked upon and regarded as the effect of bodily disease—the wasted and emaciated face of beauty in its youth has been said, even by kind and observing friends, to be the effect of some casual blight, some incurable decay, while in truth the seat of the disease—*incurable* indeed—lay deep, deep within the heart, though no one ever thought of looking for it *there.* The opening bud may be seen to droop and wither, when no apparent cause exists to account for the destruction of its beauty; yet, how few think of the worm that preys upon its root—how few dream of the unseen cause of its decay.

But I wander from my subject—I observed the impression made upon Edward, and by a strong effort I immediately resumed my natural tranquillity, and calmness of demean-

our. The deep impression of agony and remorse vanished from my countenance, and I was once more as I had been accustomed to be looked upon by him.

He sat down by my side, and took me kindly by the hand. It was hot and feverish. "You are still unwell," he exclaimed, "allow me to send for aid."

"I am not—I have not been unwell," I calmly answered.

"And yet, not for worlds," he subjoined, "would I again behold you, as I saw you within these few minutes past."

"My kind friend," I exclaimed, returning the warm pressure of his hand, "I was but overcome by the recollection of some past events which have marked my life with a dark and sad trace of sorrow—events which are buried deep—" I paused—I hesitated—

"Nay—do not think," he exclaimed, "that I wish to intrude upon your confidence—yet

believe me, light as my heart may appear to be, it can sympathize with the sorrows of a friend, and the burden divided between two, you know," he added, smiling, "will be the more easily sustained."

"Alas, Edward!" I answered, "you know not what you say—the burden that I am fated to bear with me to the grave, no being of created birth can share or lessen—would that he could, and be assured, my kind friend, to your sympathy I would apply. But the guilt—the responsibility—I have incurred alone—and alone and unaided must their consequences be borne by me. Alas! how deeply has the sin of one moment been already punished by the endless remorse of myriads of years."

"Guilt! sin!" he exclaimed, "Surely you wander in your mind—"

"No—no—my kind friend!" I answered, "my mind is as entire as it has been for

ages—as it has been since"——I paused—the recollection of the gentle Zehlima—of her innocent endearments—of the affectionate fondness of that child of nature, whose kindness soothed the wounds of a broken heart, into the secrets of which she never sought to pry—stole over me, mellowed down, but not obliterated, by the long, long interval of years, that had since elapsed: and the warm tears of a softened and almost repentant heart, rushed in torrents to my eyes.

"Strange and mysterious being!" I heard Edward say, as if speaking to himself.

"Yes, my kind friend," I continued, "my mind is entire, and I speak the sober words of truth to you. Cast me off if you will—send me forth once more a wanderer upon the face of the earth—deprive me of the sole stay on which my heart relies, and I shall only be what I have been before—a homeless, helpless, and deserted being, having no place

whereon to rest the sole of his foot, no pillow on which to repose his weary head. You—you snatched me, not from *death*, for that cannot be my lot,—would that it could—then should I rest where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest,—but from an apparently impending destruction, from which, without peril of limb and hurt, I could scarce have otherways escaped. You placed me in the bosom of your family; in it I have lived—and they who compose it are the only human beings who take an interest in my fate, or care what becomes of the weary and heart-broken one. Yet now thrust me forth from its bosom if you will, and you too, perchance, will cease to remember me, as many, many have done before; but one secret of my heart and life must remain hidden—deeply hidden—in this heart, from the knowledge of a world which could neither appreciate its importance, nor comprehend the

truth its disclosure would reveal. Cast me off then from your friendship—place me where you found me, and leave me once more to find my way through a world in which I shall then behold no human being who can have a single thought in common with me."

I paused, and gradually loosened my hold of the hand which I had hitherto grasped in mine. I looked upon Edward, and by the dim light of the lamp beside us, I saw a variety of contending emotions depicted upon his countenance. I fancied I could read them, while he arose, and with hasty steps traversed the narrow room. I imagined I could see the workings of brotherly love and affection rising from his heart, and almost deemed I overheard the reasonings of his mind. "Shall I continue in the society of my sisters one who accuses himself of heinous sin and guilt? Shall I be instrumental in contaminating their pure minds by the ap-

proach of one whose loaded conscience can find no relief in confession to his fellow man; of one around whom a mystery so impenetrable is for ever doomed to hang?" Again, as he approached and cast his eye upon me, a different expression marked his fine features, and I fancied the language of his heart to be, "What right have I to condemn a fellow-creature unheard?– what right have I to cast forth upon the world one whom I may be the means of rescuing from impending ruin and destruction? In the heart of him who so frankly acknowledges that he has been guilty of iniquity and sin, the seeds of repentance *must* be already sown, and even were it not so, what danger can my sisters run while I am here to protect and guard them, should I even cast behind the trebly fenced bulwark of their own pure and spotless thoughts? No, no,—I cannot thus upon a slight suspicion thrust forth the stranger whom we have all

loved,—I cannot drive him again to seek refuge amongst those by whom he may not be appreciated, simply because he chooses to retain within his own breast the history of those pangs by which the joys of his earlier life have been destroyed, and the prospects of his future existence overcast."

He reasoned as too many of the world reason, without premises and without facts—on supposititious conjectures, and fancies of his own creation. He advanced towards me and held out his hand. "In your honour I place implicit confidence;" was all he said, and I pressed his hand to my heart, for I felt that I had gained a friend, and I gloried in the friend I had thus gained. I knew that he would not desert me, for he had fearlessly cast behind him the despotic trammels of received opinion, and clasped to his heart, and received to the bosom of his family, the wayfaring stranger, of whose eventful life

he knew nothing save that it was surrounded by a dark cloud of mystery which he could never hope to penetrate or dispel. This was indeed the confiding frankness of a noble nature—of a heart above suspicion—and I prized and esteemed it as such.

Alas! how often does it happen that even in the moment when the heart is buoyed up on the light and feathery wings of hope, something comes to dash it on a sudden from the eminence it has gained. So at least it has ever been with mine, and the present instance could not form a solitary exception to the general destiny of my life. Even while my heart was thus buoyant with the prospect of many years of future bliss, a sad recollection came upon it and at once crushed it to the earth. The friend I gazed upon must sink into the vale of years while the green hues of youth still flourished around my brow—the winter of his age would come while the spring

of mine remained, and, at last, he would sink, and all that I loved and cherished with him, into the dark and silent grave; while none, no! not one would be left to lay each head upon its solitary pillow of repose, save he alone who would gladly have preserved their lives, if it had been possible, by the sacrifice of his own.—Oh, the curse of interminable existence—the sorrow—the dismay—the hopeless agony and distress that follow in its train!"

For the present moment, however, my mind was too much elated long to bear the impression of these dark and melancholy thoughts; and it was with feelings of more than heartfelt gratitude I poured a blessing upon my friend as he retired to rest, after the conference of which I have given but a faint and imperfect sketch.

It has often been matter of surprise to me, when looking back on my past life, that incidents so slight could ever have moved me

thus. But the powerful energies of my mind were yet in the freshness of their vigour—and even now, when the hand of time has somewhat blunted these, I cannot help thinking, that, while they remain at all, the most aged must, in a certain degree, remain alive to the pangs and disappointments of this world, even when his heart has long been dead to all the bliss and joy its more fond and delightful affections can bestow. Surely it is in this that the curse of a long existence is embodied. —For, in what would the evil of its length consist, if the gradual decay of the mental energies, in the ordinary course of a human life, should render the sufferer incapable of estimating the extent of his punishment, or looking forward to the fearful prospect of its long endurance.—He would, indeed, move through the world for an apparently interminable space of time; but, like the idiot, whose mind is an utter blank, he would take

no note of time—and could not, therefore, shrink from that fearful punishment, the consequences of its protracted endurance here ever must inflict.

The next morning arose a bright and beautiful one, but the sun had penetrated far into my chamber ere I awoke from the deep and heavy slumber into which I had fallen. I hastened to join my friends, and found them all assembled at their morning meal. As I entered the apartment, I was greeted by the united voices of the party—all, except that of Edward Dinwiddie, who cast upon me a silent but a searching look.—It was, however, momentary, for that look met with nothing but a calm, unmoved countenance, and it was immediately withdrawn.

The important business of what was to be seen—what was to be done—then became the subject of discussion—and, as in those societies in which matters of more moment are

debated, every voice bore a different sway.— As for me, I cared little where they went. I had no curiosity left for earthly things, and while they in good-humoured mirth debated the preference of their different views, I sat silent and abstracted from all that was going on.

From this state of apathy I was aroused by the gentle hand of Ellen touching me upon the shoulder, while her quiet voice asked me, almost in a whisper, whether I would not give my vote for visiting La Scala Santa, and viewing the identical steps on which our Saviour himself trode, in the first place.

"Oh! how I long to see them!" exclaimed the sweet but enthusiastic girl, clasping her hands together while she raised her cloudless eyes to heaven.

"Surely—surely—to La Scala Santa"— I replied, without having the slightest idea of the point at issue. My casting vote alone

was wanting, and to La Scala Santa accordingly we bent our steps.

This small chapel is erected in the neighbourhood of the Lateran, and within it are the stairs which are said to have formed the ascent to Pontius Pilate's house at Jerusalem. These steps are twenty-eight in number, and formed of the finest white marble—beautiful to look upon, and reverenced by the multitude even more for their sanctity than their beauty.

When we arrived in front of the chapel, we beheld crowds of pious pilgrims flocking towards it; for another holy warfare had been closed in Europe; and they who, during the continuance of it, had committed the most unbounded licentiousness, and given themselves up a prey to every species of extravagance and vice, deemed that, by an offering to, or a self-inflicted penance at some favourite shrine, they would blot out their trans

gressions, and cause their iniquities to be remembered no more against them.

In the interior of the chapel, a sight still more strange presented itself to our view. These pilgrims trode not the sacred steps with their earthly polluted feet, but each, kneeling down, ascended the twenty-eight steps on his knees, as if he were unworthy to tread upon those stones on which the Saviour of the world had walked, even with uncovered feet.—I could not help smiling at this ludicrous instance of devotion. It was, indeed, external reverence, in which the heart had no share.

"In what," I asked, "does the merit consist, of thus ascending so many steps on their bare knees? Will one single sin, of the myriads they have committed, be forgiven, when they shall have attained the highest step of the long flight?"

"No one," exclaimed the gentle voice of Ellen, "no one surely can look upon those stônes on which the feet of our blessed Saviour himself have trode, and not feel every warm and grateful emotion of his heart awakened.—Oh! I could even press my lips upon the cold marble!"

"Yes! Ellen," I replied; "but what warrant have you to believe that the feet of your Saviour ever trode these marble steps?—Upon what grounds do you suppose that this marble, evidently of Italian birth and origin, ever basked beneath the overpowering rays of a Syrian sun?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mary, interrupting me—"do not destroy the beautiful enchantment that lingers around these few steps. They are, they must be, the steps which once led to the house of the Roman governor of Judea!

"I have seen the steps of Pontius Pilate's

house," I calmly answered, "and they were of grey marble, not of white."

"Diavolo!" exclaimed our Cicerone, starting back—no very reverent exclamation for the service in which he was engaged—"Seen! —how can that be, when these steps have been where they now stand, thanks to the piety of those bold crusaders who followed the noble Richard of England to the holy wars, for a period well nigh to four hundred years;—and methinks," he added, peering closely into my face, "you can scarce have seen so long a period yet!"

"Four hundred years," I answered, "they are but as a drop in the bucket."

"And yet enough," said our guide, interrupting me, "to fill any man's bucket choke full even to the brim!"

"Yet, four hundred years ago," I continued in a melancholy and absent tone, "I beheld

the grey unhewn marble of the steps of that house, which tradition said was Pontius Pilate's, leading to the lower terrace on which the house rested, and from which no hand was put forth to remove them. The scorching suns of summer, and the cold rains of winter may whiten the head of man, but neither will bleach the dull grey marble till it exhibit a fair and polished hue.—No—no—my friend, your steps may be holy enough, but, believe me, they have been dug from the quarries of your own sunny land, and never formed a resting-place for the weary foot of the now dispersed of Israel's race."

I saw the bloated guide turn aside to conceal an ill-suppressed smile, while he muttered to his companion—" E matto—è matto!" Edward cast upon me an enquiring look, and shook his head with a sadness of expression I had scarcely ever witnessed on his lively countenance before. Ellen, who leant upon

my arm, shrunk from me with an apparently instinctive apprehension.—But the smile with which I regarded her was calm though melancholy, and she seemed to be at once reassured. —"Oh! do not," she merely said, "do not make a jest of sacred things, even although the darkness of superstition has cast a shadow over them."

"A jest, Ellen," I answered: "do *I* look like one that would frame a light or foolish jest?—I trusted, Ellen, that *you* had known me better."

"I think not," she hesitatingly replied, in answer to my question—"yet there is something, I know not what, strangely mysterious about you."

"*There is!*"—I emphatically exclaimed—"there is, Ellen, and that mystery I fear must ever remain unsolved."

"Beware!"—said Edward, approaching, and whispering in my ear, so as to be heard

only by Ellen and myself—"beware! you are surrounded by those whose misrepresentation of what you have within these few minutes uttered, might consign you for life to the dungeons of the Inquisition."

"For life"—was the thought that passed through my mind, as we turned our backs upon the chapel of La Scala Santa—"*for life*;" and generation after generation, those who held me bound would pass away, till the memory of man had ceased to number the years of the solitary prisoner's confinement, and the record of future ages could only say—"He was there in our father's time."

CHAPTER V.

"Our very priests, who, in the opinion of modern infidels, have so long triumphed over the human understanding, now admit that it was the failing of mankind, a few centuries ago, to believe in every absurdity which the ignorance of their predecessors imposed on them.

"I beseech you not only to use the light of revelation as the means of purifying your knowledge, but to let it guide you through the intricacies with which your mind is entangled, and bring you onward to immortal life."

MACKERSY'S GENER'S LETTERS.

OUR next visit was to an object equally deserving of reverence as the chapel of *La Scala Santa*. In Rome there are many such, and, by those whose faith is strong, they are beheld with sincere reverence; by the weak, with incredulity or superstition. The pillar, at which our Saviour is said to have been scourged, de-

manded our attention. It is a short, but thick pillar, and in the upper part of it an iron ring, to which, in similar pillars, suffering criminals were wont to be tied, is fixed. It had been kept, in ancient days, as our guide informed us, on Mount Sion, and had been brought from the regions of the Sun by Columna, the apostolic legate, many hundred years before. Whether it had been so, or not, I cannot tell, for in the East there are many such pillars; but it seemed to me, from the entire appearance of the one before us, that it could not have been exposed to wind and weather, slight as such exposure in mine own bright land is, for a period of twelve hundred years and upwards. I could not help hazarding this remark, notwithstanding the caution I had received. In consequence, our guide looked upon me as an unbelieving heretic, who, in the short space of one hour, had thus twice offended in the most tender part.

"This, however," said Ellen, smiling, "this, at least, is of grey marble, and you have not, therefore, the same reason for your unbelief as you had with regard to the "*Scala Santa*."

"No," exclaimed our guide, as he moved from me, with a look of horror, and the intention, I firmly believe, of denouncing me to the holy tribunal, fixed in his heart—"no, it is of grey marble, and must therefore have come from Mount Zion."

"But you forget, my friend," I answered, smiling, "that your steps of *white* marble came from Sion too."

"And if they did," he replied, doggedly, "I presume there are more marbles than one in the Holy Land."

"Undoubtedly," I exclaimed, as we departed to view an object more worthy of our regard, and the claims of which, upon our attention, arose from its own intrinsic merit, and not from the shadowy cloud cast around

it by the devices of a cunning priesthood, or the associations raised in the minds of the credulous, by some fabricated tale.

The magnificent front of St. Peter's rose from the midst of the incongruous ruins by which it was surrounded, like a stately tree, in the vigour of its youth, from the midst of many a decayed and useless trunk. Its pillars, its domes, its fountains, its obelisks, the splendid magnificence of its architecture, could awake but one feeling in the mind—an overpowering sense of admiration of the grandeur it contemplated. The whole party was delighted, but on no countenance did the expression of this delight appear more quiet and chastened, than upon the pale features of the gentle Ellen. Her colour came and fled, and the varying emotions of her mind were beautifully depicted in the glowing transparency of her countenance.

" And must all this," I exclaimed to Ellen,

as we entered the church, "must all this gorgeous splendor and magnificence be one day crumbled in the dust?"

"Alas!" she answered, "it is a melancholy, but true, reflection. So very passing are all the works of man—so soon, comparatively speaking, do they fall to ruin and decay."

"Yes," I continued, after a moment's pause, "Tyre and Sidon are no more—Babylon has fallen—Goa is levelled with the dust—the most durable monuments of antiquity are uprooted from the place on which they once stood; city after city has disappeared, till scarce a single stone remains upon another to tell where they flourished; and how can Rome, even imperial Rome, or this gorgeous temple itself, expect to escape the universal ruin, which, sooner or later, awaits all that the hand of man has reared?"

"It is even so," exclaimed Mary, as she joined us; "but let us enjoy the present mo-

ment, under the tolerably certain impression, that no such event will befall in our day."

"Thoughtless girl!" I answered, "on your mind this impression may dwell with the force of certainty and truth, but ere a few short years are past, may not the hand of violence lay this splendid edifice in the dust? In my day I have beheld temples, more gorgeous, and, seemingly, more time-enduring than that on which you now gaze;—cities more strongly walled, and fenced, more securely guarded, more teeming with a brave and warlike race, in the streets of which mirth and joy resounded, even in louder strains than those which echo from beneath our feet;—and now, where are they? Even their memory is gone, and no created being lives to tell their name, or point out where they once stood."

"Strange!" she exclaimed.

"But not the less true," I added, turning to Ellen. "And even were it not so," I con-

tinued, in an under, I believe, in a half confidential tone, "even if the hand of rapine and violence should spare this congregated mass of beauty, there may be those present over whose frame no feeling of dissolution can steal, till the all-destroying hand of time shall long, long have wrought its work of desolation upon these sparkling fountains—these massy pillars, and these seemingly enduring domes."

She looked enquiringly in my face, and shook her head with a melancholy expression of countenance. I only answered by a smile; not that smile, however, which beams upon the face of youth, when hope and joy are bright and beautiful within; it was that which too plainly tells that despair has twined itself around the victim's heart, while at the same time, in the bitterness of derision, it mocks at all the consolation this world can bestow.

Ellen would have spoken, her hand was stretched forth, her lips were opened for the

purpose, when the rest of the party joined us, and we descended into the spacious subterranean church, where the mortal remains of the apostles Peter and Paul are laid in their last repose. Scorned and persecuted in their lives, and finally done to death by the most cruel and refined tortures, their cold inanimate remains are here laid in a sumptuous vault, adorned with splendid trappings, and a magnificent altar, at which the Father of the Church alone is permitted to officiate. Beside, and around them, the equally cold remains of many an ancient Pope, and worthy martyr in the cause of religion, lay. Such were then the inhabitants of this place; but in after years, as I have since heard, their number was increased by the company of those who should have worn, but never wore, a kingly crown, and yet were not exempted from those toils and troubles which are ever the inseparable attendants upon royalty—the three last chiefs

of the unhappy race of Stuart repose there, and, upon the tomb of each, the empty title of "King of Britain" stands.

It is not my intention, however, to describe those things which are in the mouth of every traveller. It is with the feelings of the heart, not with the works of the hand, of man, that I have to do—with his principles and conduct, as guided by these feelings—not with the inanimate and senseless objects he raises to gratify his ambition or his pride. In the former, even to me, there ever has been something that is new; in the latter, for a thousand years, I have seen nothing that could raise a single emotion in my mind—nothing to compare with what, in former days, I had witnessed and beheld.

Yet, let me pause, though but for a moment, to do justice to one who has long since descended to the tomb. We passed on through a long, and apparently interminable, succession

of splendid palaces, and halls to the Vatican, and there beheld the celebrated Raphael adorning its walls with the best productions of his art. I gazed upon the mimic figures as they grew beneath his magic pencil. I beheld the art of the painter call again to life scenes which I had myself witnessed. God of heaven! how my heart fluttered within me when I saw him pourtray the exact resemblance of ONE I had gazed upon and known full fifteen centuries before. Was it, could it be, imagination, or was the vivid fancy of the painter at work from the descriptions he had heard? I know not, but there that being stood, robed in the loose and flowing garments of his country, his eyes fixed upon me, and the same benignant smile I had been wont to admire, playing around his half closed lips. I was entranced, bewildered. The intervening space of time passed from the tablets of my memory—it was annihilated; and once more

I stood, with all the thoughts and feelings of past days present, in the full vigour of their bloom, to my imagination.

I knew not what was passing around me; I saw but the picture—and the hand of him whose creative fancy had given shape and form to one, who had long ceased to exist save in the imagination or the memory of others. While I gazed, his hand was raised to add another, a finishing touch to the portrait. I sprung forward, and I grasped that hand ere yet the pencil it held had touched the canvass. "Stop, stop!" I cried, "for mercy's sake, or the likeness will be destroyed." The astonished painter paused, and drew back his hand.

"Likeness!" he exclaimed, "it is but the fancied resemblance of the patriarch Joseph."

"Fancied," in turn I echoed, while I fixed my eyes upon his, as if I would have searched his soul. "There is no fancy here; the liv-

ing, breathing form of the patriarch stands before my eyes."

Again I hung over the picture, while the eyes of the painter were benevolently bent upon me. He left his intended touch undone, and proceeded in a rapid, almost a careless manner, to finish some parts of the drapery belonging to other figures in the picture. It was evident he thought my intellects deranged, —but he humoured my wayward fancy, and, as I retired to join my friends, he kindly thanked me for the hint I had given him, and hoped again to profit by my advice. I never saw him more! Long ere we left Rome, in the prime and vigour of his youth, he died. But his works have remained behind him, and reared to him a name that will live even when that of the founders of more durable monuments shall have perished.

When I joined my friends, I found them discussing the merits of the artist I had left.

Their opinion was unanimous. They could not, and therefore did not, praise the tone or style of his colouring—but the richness of his imagination, the depth and vigour of his conceptions, and the inexpressible grace and beauty of his figures, were all themes of endless and unceasing praise.

No one was more eloquent in extolling the artist's qualities than the usually modest and retiring Ellen. So much so, indeed, that she attracted the attention of a remarkably handsome and elegant-looking young cavalier, whom I had observed for some time examining a portrait of the Madonna. Tired, however, of his unprofitable employment, he soon turned to admire a specimen of nature's work, more exquisitely lovely and beautiful than even the finished gem of art upon which he had previously been bestowing all of admiration and wonder he had to spare. His look was fixed for some time upon the glowing

and animated countenance of the speaker, before she discovered herself to be the object of his attention. When she did, there was no affectation in the deep blush which suffused her countenance, nor in the timid and retiring manner in which she shrunk to her father's side for protection. The stranger saw the confusion he had created, and instantly withdrew his gaze. Ellen seemed relieved, and thankful to him for the considerate manner in which he had behaved—while I; I know not why, for what was—what *could*—either Ellen or the stranger ever be to me, would have felt better pleased, if he had shewn less modesty or propriety of demeanour in his conduct.

Slight as this incident was, it conjured up a long succession of vague ideas within my breast, and I felt somewhat uneasy, till the stranger left the gallery. Methought the glancing eyes of Mary followed his retiring

footsteps with a lingering look, for she approached her sister and I heard her whisper, "How very handsome he is;—yet not so handsome"—she added after a short, a very short pause, "as ——!" The name was lost to my ear, but it called up a deep and glowing blush upon Ellen's cheek, which her sister gently patted, as with a playful smile she took me by the arm, and led me to examine some paintings at the opposite extremity of the room.

I heard Edward laugh as we retired, and I felt—I scarce know how I felt—as if I would have given worlds to have heard that whispered name—to have known the secret history of that blush—the meaning of that kind, yet more than half-suppressed laugh. Alas! dear Ellen, at that time I little knew how much, how deeply concerned *I* was in them all. No, with all my boasted wisdom—with all my knowledge of the human heart, I knew it not,

and I asked myself, again and again, what had I to do with them, or what, more than a passing friend, with Ellen, or aught of her concerns. So it always is. We are ever prone to deceive ourselves in that which interests us most deeply, and, had I not been blind indeed, those very questions which I asked myself might have taught my heart the extent of the interest it took in the answers to them. The passing events of time, however, taught me much. They brought with them those dear-bought lessons of experience which deaden the more earthly feelings of the heart, and, like a frost in spring, nip many of its fairest buds of promise, till they teach it to rest upon that world where no disappointment can reach, and no chilling frosts can come, to cheat the fairest hopes, or blight the beauty of a single flower.

We left the gallery, and returned to our home, and then, day after day, week after

week, month after month, were spent in happiness and peace at Rome. We saw all that was worthy of being seen, and yet I believe, notwithstanding the estimation in which much of what we saw was held, the wonders of imperial Rome would have had no place in my thoughts, had it not been for the society in which I moved.

Daily, I became more and more attached to the gentle Ellen. I felt the unquenched, the ungovernable fire, which animates the breasts of those who are born in the regions of the sun, burn within me; and often did I deprecate the cold reserve and prudence of a northern clime. Yet, Ellen was always kind, always gentle, always amiable, and I could scarcely bear, even for an hour, to be separated from her side. Often, often have I caught her eyes fixed upon me with a mild yet melancholy expression. It was that look, which spoke both of pity and affection,

and, when I thought of the general tenour of her life, I could almost fancy the whispered language of her heart to be." He does not serve my God—the creator of the universe is not in all his thoughts, and I must not give my heart where my esteem could never follow. Oh! that he would turn from the error of his ways!"

I would then ask myself—in what am I to blame? I never scoffed at sacred things! No, *I* could not have done *that*; but I possessed not the pure singleness of heart which Ellen had. I knew not then the doctrine of the atonement by a Saviour's death in its full extent. It was, indeed, matter of history to me, but my heart had no concern in it, and this Ellen well knew, for often had we conversed upon the subject. She strove to enlighten me, strove, in her own kind and gentle manner, to remove the dark veil from my heart; her

words made no impression, and my understanding was shut against the blessed lessons she would have taught. Alas! how often does this happen; yet, were there more Ellens in the world, there would be less of that gross darkness and superstition which have lowered man to a place but little above the brute creation in the scale of being. Her's was indeed the religion of the heart—meek, gentle, pure, and easy to be extended, and her example corresponded with her theory. There was no affectation of austerity—no dark and gloomy looks—no display—no pretension to what she did not possess, about Ellen. She was gay, light-hearted, cheerful, as the most innocent of God's created beings. Her rule of life was taken from the revealed will of the Most High. She sought no strained interpretation of the Scriptures; she received them, humbly and meekly, as they were writ-

ten, and in her heart she believed that, in so far as regarded salvation, they were indeed so plain that "he who ran might read."

But I anticipate:—these were sentiments impressed upon my mind in after years, when infidelity had spread its wings abroad in the world; when the "elect," as they called themselves, contending for an interpretation of the Scriptures, at variance with the Scriptures and with common sense alike, denounced damnation unsparingly upon all those who were not of the same opinions as themselves; when those of the same age and sex as Ellen arose with unblushing countenance to teach the fathers of the church; when egotism and pride usurped the place of meekness and humility; ignorance, vanity, and conceit, of wisdom, knowledge, and self-abasement; and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was sought for at convivial parties, where no such Spirit could enter in, and presumptuously

fancied to be obtained by those whose hearts were so filled with the besetting sins of ignorance and pride, that no room was left for so pure a spirit to inhabit there. Oh! how unlike the mild and gentle Ellen were the professors of these sentiments and doctrines! But I have lived to see that spirit quelled—these fanatics put down—their heated imaginations cooled—their madness and their folly crushed into the dust—and honesty and virtue once more resume their reign.

When I think of these follies, my heart burns with more of indignation than a Christian man should feel, and I am tempted to apply the lash of bitter and unsparing ridicule to them. But this may not be—I have a task to fulfil, and that task leads me another way.

I was now the constant attendant of Ellen, and, as nothing can always remain under the influence of a cloudless sun without, at last,

acquiring something of its brightness and beauty, I gradually acquired, or rather began to fancy I had acquired, somewhat of the spotless purity of Ellen's mind. It was indeed fancy, and in this again I allowed myself to be deceived—miserably deceived—so true are the words of wisdom, that the most difficult lesson a man can learn is to know himself. I was happy, I was contented, because I had nothing to disturb my peace, and this happiness and contentment I vainly imagined arose from a change in my inward feelings, instead of from the casual circumstances in which I was placed, and the objects by which I was externally surrounded. The impression, in short, was conveyed *to* and not *from* the heart.

The illusion, however, was soon dissipated. I observed with pain that, ere many weeks had elapsed after our visit to the Vatican, the cavalier of the gallery seemed to follow our

footsteps like a shadow. Ellen was evidently the object of his attraction. Wherever we went, there was that eternal cavalier seen. Every opportunity that offered to obtain an introduction was seized by him, and, with the inhabitants of any nation under the sun, except England alone, he must have succeeded. National reserve, combined with that of innate modesty, kept him at a distance, and he could only look, gaze, admire, and worship in silence, like some devotee at the shrine of a favourite saint.

Did we appear at the celebration of the mass, the Cavalier was the most devout of all the worshippers there. Did we admire the beautiful statues in the Church of Santa Maria, built upon the site of a fair temple erected by the great Pompey, no sculptor was more enthusiastic or ardent than he. Adrian's Villa,—he was there, perambulating the extensive grounds, admiring the scenery,

poring over the ruins, and affecting all the zeal and love of knowledge the most ambitious antiquary could display. Amidst the classic scenery of Tivoli, he stood with a manuscript ode of the immortal poet in his hand. At the Villa of Mæcenas—the Temple of Hercules—the Church of St. Pietro in Vincoli—the Pantheon—the Capitoline Gallery—the Baths of Dioclesian—of Caracalla—wherever we went, he was there. Upon Monte Cavallo, he stood busily employed taking a miniature sketch of the Colossal statues of Castor and Pollux. On the Palatine Hill he reclined in melancholy guise, contemplating the fearful mass of ruins time had made of the Palace of the Cæsars. In short, he appeared to be omnipresent; for, turn which way we would, go where we might, there he was, as if he had possessed the faculty of multiplying himself into a hundred forms, and

wherever Ellen went, sending one, like a shadow, to attend her footsteps.

I could not look upon this constant, this devoted attention, from one so young and handsome without much uneasiness of mind. It gave rise to many a merry hour at home, amidst the light-hearted beings by whom I was surrounded.—I could not, however, join in their mirth, for my heart was sad within me. Edward rallied *me* upon the dullness of my manner, and *Ellen* upon the conquest she had made.

"What, my gentle sister," he exclaimed, "a Roman princess! Oh! how delighted I shall be to place the marriage crown upon your head; and," he added, laughing, "were we only within reach of our own quiet and peaceful home, you might reward your knight of the doleful countenance here with a branch from the old willow that grows by the river side."

"I wish," said Ellen, smiling, while a slight blush suffused her countenance, "I wish we were all once more seated beneath the branches of that old willow, although not to apply them to the purpose you have so kindly suggested."

"Would that we were," added Mary; "I love my own quiet home, my own country, its blue mountains, its peaceful valleys, and its clear and limpid streams. Yes! much as I admire all that we have seen of the beauties of nature, and of the works of art, of cloudless skies, and marble palaces, I would not exchange my own dear country, with its heath-covered hills and humble cottages, for all the splendour I have beheld.—No—no—let my last look be fixed upon my own native hills, and I shall die happy."

"Not, however, I assure you," exclaimed Edward, laughing, "not till we have made the acquaintance of Ellen's Roman Prince—an adventure which I am determined forthwith to

achieve; for whatever wish you, Mary, may have to pine amidst your own bleak and barren mountains, Ellen, perchance, may desire to vegetate in some milder and more genial clime!"

He had scarcely finished speaking, when he left the room, and in two minutes afterwards was seen bounding across the square in front of the window where we sat.

"Where can that wild boy be gone to?" said Ellen.

I felt a momentary pang strike across my heart, for I could not help imagining, wild as the idea was, that he had gone in search of the Roman youth, for the purpose of introducing him to the family.

"To look for your admirer, Ellen!"—I exclaimed, in a half smiling, half serious mood. She laughed, but said nothing; and, wishing apparently to change the conversation, made some remark on the beauty of the evening,

and proposed a short excursion to examine some ancient ruins in the neighbourhood of the city. The proposal was scarcely made before it was complied with, and, ere many minutes had elapsed, we were on our way to the ruins.

I remember that evening well.—The sun was fast sinking towards the west. A few golden clouds rested on the extreme verge of the horizon. A balmy, lifeless stillness filled the air, and a faint undulating hue of crimson spread itself over the western sky, and shone upon the land and water beneath, till both appeared to be so mingled that the one could scarcely be distinguished from the other. In short, it was one of those still, calm, beautiful evenings of the south, which, if the mind has any conception of a Deity at all, naturally raises every thought and feeling, with a glow of gratitude and thankfulness, to heaven; and, if it is lost in unbelief and sin, forces it to

shrink from the contemplation of those calm, yet imposing beauties, which so plainly, but eloquently, speak of the existence of another world—of a divine ruler—and of a perfect and undisturbed peace and rest.

As we proceeded on our way, an unbroken silence was, for some time, preserved. Yet let it not be supposed that this was the silence of reserve. In such an hour there is a communion of souls, where heart answers heart; and although no audible sounds reach the ear, the silent language is felt and understood.—I imagined this to be the case at present. I fancied I knew what was passing in Ellen's mind, and I ventured gently, most gently, to press the hand that rested on my arm.—Methought the pressure was returned: in this, however, I might have been mistaken; but her hand was not withdrawn, and she dropped her light veil over her eyes, as one would do who wished to hide a starting tear.—I knew

her heart, and at that moment it must have been full even to overflowing. Mine, at least, was so—and I felt relieved when Mary's voice broke the long silence that had fallen, like a spell, upon us. We had reached the summit of a gently rising eminence, and the full beauty of the west, in all its breathless calmness, broke at once upon our view.

"Oh! how lovely!" she exclaimed, in an ecstacy of delight: "I could almost imagine those golden clouds to be the gate of heaven!"

"And if the gate, Mary," I asked her, "be so beautifully calm and bright, and, to the eye of fancy, hold out the promise of so much peace and rest, what, think you, must the inner mansions of the blest, the homes of the happy, be?"

"I know not," she answered, after a moment's pause; "but the idea I have always entertained of heaven is, that it is a place of endless peace and rest; in beauty far sur-

passing aught that has ever been seen or dreamt of in this world of ours.—There we shall meet those we have loved and been separated from here—there we shall all be reunited, never, never to part again—there we shall have no more sighing, and no more sorrow—no more separation—and no more tears; nothing to wound or bruise the heart—no sickness, no *death*.—No! no—nothing but endless sunshine, and undying love.—Oh! Ellen, is it not so?"

"Heaven," answered Ellen, smiling, while she gently pressed her sister's hand, "I believe to be all that you have pictured; but, oh! Mary, you have left out the most important feature in your description. It is a place of perfect, unspotted holiness, pure as untrodden snow, where no sin, nothing that defiles, either in thought, word, or deed, can enter—and where the redeemed shall for ever enjoy the society of their God."

I felt my heart swell within me, and bright and beautiful hopes dawn, as it were, upon my soul, at the poetical description Mary gave of heaven, and there was nothing in the mild truths which Ellen uttered to dissipate the illusion.—But it soon vanished—vanished in the certainty that no created man, be his information and his wisdom what they may—can know aught of the glories of a blessed heaven save what the book of revelation has so sparingly revealed.

"Is there not," I asked, "much of fancy in the pictures both of you have drawn? You, Mary, imagine that the height of happiness consists in uninterruptedly enjoying the society of those we love, without being sensible of the evils to which, while we remain in our present imperfect state, we must ever be subject—and, therefore, you picture the excellency of heaven as consisting in the enjoyment of an everlasting state of existence, freed from

all that blights the promise and mars the reality of your fondest hopes below.—*Here*, while it is yet summer, you must look forward to the darkness of the coming winter—*there*, the light of summer will for ever reign, without a cloud to dim its brightness, or scare even your most passing thought with the idea of a coming storm. Your heart, Ellen"--I added, in a lower and somewhat agitated voice, "your heart, even *here*, is fixed upon holiness and God; and, in the enjoyment of His society, where no worldly thought can intervene, your imagined heaven has its reality and life. Both are, indeed, pictures over which an endless sunshine sheds its rays of beauty and delight. Yet, of the details of heaven, or in what its blessedness consists, we *are* all, and, from the beginning of the world, *have been*, and to the end of time, *shall be*, equally ignorant and uninformed.—From the mansions of the blest no one has ever returned, to tell of what

is there; and we but know this, that heaven is a place of perfect happiness, where no sin nor sorrow can exist, and every tear shall be wiped from every eye. But of that in which its happiness consists, and of the place where it is situated, we are ignorant indeed.—It may, perchance, be in some remote and undiscovered quarter of this earth on which we now tread—for, oh! was not Paradise, the happy, blest, beautiful abode of our first parent, situated in the midst of mine own delightful land?—Alas! how beautiful were its streams—how spotless its purity—how undying its verdure—how unceasing the splendour of its spring—till sin came, and, with its pestilential breath, blighted and destroyed them all. Or, if not here, the heaven of futurity, perchance, may be the centre of some new, glorious, and unthought-of system, around which yonder beauteous sun, the pale moon, and all the planets, shall revolve, throughout the ages of

a long eternity of bliss. Again, if this please not your views, it may exist in some newly-created orb, that, when all we now see adorning the universe shall have dissolved and disappeared, may, in the immensity of space, dwell and be alone—its own sun—its own moon—its own heaven, and its own light.—In short, conjecture may exhaust itself in fruitless and unavailing efforts.—On this side of time, all that with certainty can be said, must still be, that heaven is a place of perfect happiness—but where it shall be situated, or in what that happiness shall consist, no one can say to his brother—"Thou art ignorant, but I am informed."

While I spoke, and gazed at the beautiful country that lay spread in all its graceful undulations, and variegated beauty, before me, the passing sunshine of enthusiasm lighted up my features with a glow that had long been a stranger there. I saw the unbidden tear rush

into the eyes of the happy, thoughtless Mary, while she gaily bounded away to conceal it from my sight.—" Beautiful being"— I whispered to myself, and I turned from the fair prospect I had been admiring, to gaze upon her sister. Her veil was still down, but through its thin texture I saw the pearly moisture glitter upon her cheek, I felt the gentle pressure, the slight trembling of her hand as she leant upon my arm.—I heard the half-suppressed sob echo from her breast; and I almost fancied I could read each passing thought of her pure and sinless mind.—" Sweet child of nature!" was the half-whispered thought which arose, amidst the still beauty of that evening, from my heart.

CHAPTER VI.

"Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on:"
"Oh! what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who doats, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves."

SHAKSPEARE.

For many days the current of our lives passed on in the same unvaried stillness. I had accustomed myself to look upon Ellen as my own—to imagine the affections of her youthful heart were mine; and while I thus slumbered away the noon and evening of my days in fancied security and repose, I was, comparatively speaking, happy.

It is true, we had never spoken of love, and I had no warrant, except that which the gratuitous assurance of my own hopes and wishes granted to my heart, for believing that Ellen regarded me in any other light than as a friend. I was constantly in her society—her manner was affectionate—her kindness uniform and unwearied—and there was no one present or near to contend for the palm of her affections with me. It is not then to be wondered at that I should insensibly fall into a state of security, with regard to her favour, which I feared to disturb by any premature disclosure or avowal upon my part. Had Ellen been associating with the world, and daily receiving the homage and adoration to which she was so pre-eminently entitled, it would have been otherways—for then I must have girded my loins to the race, buckled on my armour for the combat, and by diligence and perseverance sought to have outstripped my

competitors, and gained the prize for which all would so eagerly have contended. At present I had no competitor, and while, day after day passed away, in the same unvaried beauty—in the enjoyment of the same fancied happiness, I rested satisfied without seeking, by any rash or inconsiderate act, perchance to dissipate the illusion, and, by breaking the charm which surrounded me, awake to know that the prize for which I would have strained every nerve, could never, never, on this side of time, be mine.

It is thus that human nature ever trembles at the prospect of arousing itself from any dream of fancied bliss into which it has fallen. It fears to disturb the listlessness of its repose, and rather prefers enjoying, in imagination, that which has no existence, than to be convinced by the words of truth, that its hopes and dreams have been alike false and vain.

In the enjoyment of ignorance, therefore, I

preferred passing my days, to the risk of dissipating the illusion under which I lived. It is true, the melancholy reflection of the wide difference which fate had placed betwixt me and every created being, sometimes stole across my mind to blight the fairest moments of its bliss; but these reflections were of a temporary and passing nature; like angel visits, they were few and far between, and gradually occurred less frequently, till, at last, they almost entirely vanished from my mind.

It may be asked, if I was now entirely happy—if I could so far banish from recollection the realities of my existence, as not to mar the happiness of the present moment by looking forward to hours of wretchedness and woe?

It is, no doubt, the natural bent of the human mind to enter into the enjoyment of present bliss, without seeking to anticipate

future evil, and, in this, much of its happiness consists. But experience had taught me many a bitter lesson. I knew that *I* could not escape from that which was to come, and when I now look back upon this period of my existence, and think of the happiness I then enjoyed, of the listless security in which I slumbered, it appears to me as if these hours of social enjoyment had been a passing vision, dreamt of in the morning of my life.

This could not, however, last for ever, and an incident soon occurred which awoke me to a sense of the situation in which I stood, and drew from me a confession of that which, in all probability, would not otherways have been disclosed.

It had been my habit, occasionally, to indulge in solitary rambles, during the progress of which I might, without danger of interruption, ruminate upon the numerous events of my past life, and look forward, with a melancholy

glance, to those which might yet occur ere time should cease to be. There was, perhaps, little of enjoyment in this—I could but judge of the future by the past, and that only gave me the promise of still living to behold every bliss that I could hope to enjoy, pass from me, like snow melting in the sun, while I—*I* would remain behind to mourn over the vanished beauty of the scene and all the joys it had once so plentifully promised and bestowed.

Nevertheless, I sometimes experienced a momentary sensation of delight in looking forward, to contemplate a long anticipated rest. Aowever protracted the day might be, I knew that the calm and beautiful hour of sunset would at length arrive; and when, with the resistless force of a wild and energetic mind, my fancy skimmed over the intervening period, and pictured that bright hour as at hand, everv feeling of my heart and soul for the moment

rose in gratitude to the God I had offended; and I felt as if earth and all its solid matter were passing from beneath my feet, and I no longer trode upon substance, but lived and moved in some light etherial atmosphere of my own. Then my spirit soared with the joyful anticipation of a glad release. But, alas! cold calculating reality soon resumed its power, and the idea of the long, long period of wretchness and dismay which must intervene, before that moment could arrive, sunk upon my heart and plunged me into the depths of sorrow and despair.

One calm still evening, on my return from a solitary ramble of this description, I felt a more than usually elevated lightness of spirit and of mind. I entered the habitation of my friends with a smiling countenance and a bouyant step. I hastened to the apartment in which they were accustomed to assemble for the evening. I heard the sound of voices, of

laughter, of merriment within—I was accustomed to their chastened mirth, and my heart responded with delight to its sound. I opened the door;—alas! how instantaneous was the revulsion every feeling underwent. The Cavalier of the Vatican, the man I feared and detested to behold, was seated there, laughing, talking, singing, as if he had been one of the family for many years. He was made known to me as the Condè di Portici, and it was with difficulty I could suppress the display of those feelings which boiled within my breast, when I replied to his polite, I might almost say, kind salutation. After a few common-place observations, he returned to the seat at Ellen's side, which he had quitted on my entrance. He untied the string of her guitar, and, taking the instrument from her hands, sang, with remarkable sweetness and taste, one of the popular melodies of the day. It was a melancholy song, and the soft turns

of the music floated on the ear like the wild notes of an Æolian harp. I could fancy I beheld a tear in Ellen's eye, and I bit my lip till the violence of the pressure had well-nigh caused the blood to spring.

"Will the Signor sing," said the Condè, as he handed the guitar to me. I complied with his wish. I took the paltry instrument in my hand, and the deep tones of my voice rolled throughout the room, as with a bursting heart which felt the truth of every word it uttered, I sung of events which, for thousands of years had been buried deep in the abyss of time.

A dark and sudden gloom overspread the party, but it was soon dissipated by the light-hearted sallies of the Count, who seemed to think he had been at once admitted into the enjoyments of the seventh heaven. I arose from my seat, I threw the instrument upon the ground, and retired to a recess of the apartment to hide the disturbed expression of my

countenance from view. As I did so, I saw a smile on Mary's face. I beheld a half sly, half suppressed look of curiosity upon Edward's features, but the countenance of Ellen remained unmoved. The calm repose which spoke of a heart at peace with itself was there —her mild, beautiful eyes met the disturbed and fiery glance of mine for an instant, and there was so much of sweetness, methought of gentle reproof, in that look, that even in my heart's core I blessed her for it.

The demon of jealousy had now taken possession of my soul, and aroused me to the full knowledge of how much—how fondly I was attached to Ellen. I had not dreamt that I loved her so; for could I wish to entail wretchedness and misery upon a being fair and beautiful as she?—No!—I had fancied these feelings—the susceptibility of earthly love, and all the other passions which follow in its train, had been long dead within me. In

this I was mistaken. It was one of the curses of my protracted existence, that, while years multiplied around me, and the snows of age would, a hundred times over, have chilled the passions of the oldest of the human race, the burning fever of my heart should remain unallayed, and I should still be, as in the vigour of youth, susceptible to every feeling and to every passion which could agitate or move the human frame.

The Condè di Portici now became a constant visitor, almost, indeed, an inmate of the family. His mornings were passed in our society—he read, he sketched, he sung, he played upon the guitar—his days were consumed in accompanying us upon short expeditions to the neighbouring country, to the beauties of which he proved an excellent guide. Every spot had a legend or a tale connected with it, and no one could tell it with more grace than Di Portici. His evenings

were spent as his mornings had been, and the advance of night alone warned him to depart. His affectionate, his respectful attentions to Ellen, were too marked to be misunderstood—and I fancied that she in return looked upon him with eyes that spoke of aught but indifference. In the moments of calm reflection, indeed, I was forced to confess to myself, that no one could know Di Portici without feeling a strong and lively interest in all that concerned him. He was one of the most light-hearted, happy beings, I ever knew; he was amiable—he was accomplished—he was handsome. He was of Patrician birth, and yet he was not vain—he was wealthy, yet he was not proud—he was well informed, yet he made no vain show or exhibition of his learning—he was kind-hearted and affectionate, yet he made no parade of his kindness; but he *loved* Ellen, and that, in my eyes, was sufficient to throw a veil over every good and amiable quality he

possessed. He would have introduced the Dinwiddies to his own family, and to many others of the highest rank in Rome, but they declined his kind offer, and I was glad that they did so, for Ellen had been an invalid; their object was peace and quiet for her sake, and they wished not to mix with the society of the rich, the powerful, and the gay, where neither could have been found. With that urbanity and kindness, however, which characterized all he did, Mr. Dinwiddie softened the pain he saw his refusal had occasioned, by assuring Di Portici he should ever feel happy to receive into his family circle, any friends or acquaintance he might wish to introduce.

Di Portici was not long in availing himself of the liberty he had thus obtained, and I soon saw our quiet family circle *broken up*, as I imagined, by the introduction of several youthful friends of the Count. Others, however, looked upon these introductions in a

different light. They did not regard them as breaking up, but, as in truth what they really were, and what but for the jaundiced eye with which I now regarded every thing, I must have acknowledged them to be, pleasing additions to our society. None of these new acquaintances, however, had influence sufficient to awaken in my heart any of those feelings, or of those fears, with which I regarded Di Portici; and, ultimately, I became rather reconciled to their society, in the vain idea, that, amidst the many, Ellen could not be so exclusively the property of Portici, as she would otherwise have been. I fancied he could not have so many, so frequent opportunities of bestowing, unobserved, undivided attention upon her; for, when alone, I had hitherto, from a feeling for which I could not account even to myself, carefully avoided their society. I saw not, fool that I was, that this increased society could only have the effect,

had he wished it, of consigning Ellen more exclusively to his care, by separating Mary, Edward, and myself, from their immediate company in our excursions.

These excursions were now almost of daily occurrence. Every morning brought Di Portici with it, and with Di Portici some new scheme of amusement for the remainder of the day. He was fertile in expedients, inexhaustible in resources, and, in truth, but for him we should never have seen half of the wonders we beheld. To me, indeed, these were of little moment, but I enjoyed the expressions of surprise and admiration elicited from others, at every new and unexpected sight. Would that I could have been even as they were, but that was impossible.

In the thoughts, the feelings, the passions of the heart, I had, indeed, a community of sentiment with others of the human race; and it was with pain I beheld, in these our numerous

excursions, that Di Portici was seldom or ever absent from Ellen's side. I thought, too, that she enjoyed his society, and, in the exercise of a high pride of heart, I forbore to intrude mine upon her. Sometimes I would persuade Edward to accompany me in a solitary expedition, but I was wretched, utterly wretched, and he laughed at my melancholy mood. At other times I attached myself to Mary, and never left her side. She received my attentions with kindness, but there was a smile of meaning upon her countenance that shewed she saw, or at least fancied she saw, their object. It was right that it should be so, yet I know not that I ever seriously wished to pique Ellen, or to awaken one thought of jealousy in her breast. If I had, my pains would have been thrown away, for I never observed a single feature indicate, nor aught appear upon her countenance to shew that her well-regulated mind ever, for an instant,

lost its self possession. She was kind, universally kind to all, but towards me there was more constraint in her general manner and deportment. This I could not bear; and, day by day, the restraint I had placed upon myself became more irksome and intolerable. Night after night was passed in sleepless meditation, or in tossing to and fro, in that disturbed and feverish rest, which only the weary and the wretched know. My mind was scared by fearful dreams. I saw visions in the night, when I neither slept nor was awake; my blood boiled like a torrent in my veins; and my health gradually sunk under the constant state of feverish excitement in which I lived. This, however, could not last, and, I believe, had not some opening soon occurred, whereby my pent up passions found release, they would have burst forth like a long suppressed torrent, and brought destruction on myself and all around.

Ere this occurred, these wayward feelings were fairly wound up to the highest and most unaccountable pitch of maddened excitement. One beautiful morning, when the gradually dispersing mists of autumn, rising from the neighbouring valley, promised the continuance of a still more lovely day, we set out, as had been arranged the preceding evening, upon an excursion to Tivoli. We soon reached the entrance of the once far famed and magnificent villa of Adrian. We made a complete circuit of its grounds, and gazed with intense interest upon the ruined remains of temples, baths, grottoes, and buildings of a thousand shapes and forms. They were equal in magnitude to the extensive ruins of Ancient Rome itself; but he who had originally caused these crumbling walls to be erected, had long slumbered with them in the dust. His theatre, his Elysian fields, all that the luxurious Emperor had vainly fancied would last for ever,

had now well nigh disappeared. It was a melancholy, an humbling reflection, that the works of man should thus go to nought, while one feeble frame had been able to withstand the blasts of those thousands of winters, beneath the violence of which they had fallen to decay. Earth and earthly things appeared of little moment to me, while I contemplated these ruins; for I knew that all, even the best and fairest that I gazed upon, must, like them, perish in the lapse of years, while I should remain untouched, unscathed, unharmed, a monument of the divine wrath and vengeance, till Time should be no more. What then could the world or its creatures be to me? I turned from the ruins, and determined that the vanities and affections of this life should no more ensnare my heart.

How little do we know of ourselves. When any, even the slightest incident occurs, to put our wisely formed resolutions to the trial, how

evanescent do they appear. We had not proceeded many steps, when Ellen stumbled over a fragment of ruin that lay concealed among the wild flowers and grass. Instinctively I stretched forth my hand to her aid. But the everlasting Di Portici was before me. She caught, it appeared to me, *willingly* at *his* hand, while she despised my proffered aid. She leant upon his arm, and when the trifling, petty danger had passed away, she offered not to quit the support it afforded. No!—hanging upon it—affectionately, kindly hanging upon it, she proceeded on her way, the happy boy all smiles and joy, and I—*I* remaining behind, cursing the hour I had first seen the light, cursing the day when my heart had once more yielded to the vanity of earthly love.

Trifling as the circumstance may appear, I would have given worlds to have been in the situation in which Di Portici then was. Had

I not breathed one word—had I not uttered a single syllable—I would have felt at the summit of earthly happiness and joy. There is an endearing charm in the close and intimate society of those we love, even when no utterance is given to a single thought, that language cannot describe, and the imagination scarcely can conceive. But this, like every other blessing, was denied to me; and I turned away with those feelings which none but the wretched and the guilty know, burning within my breast, and preying upon the life-strings of my heart.

In this fearful mood I joined Mary and her friends. My clouded countenance, and darkly flashing eyes, must have formed a strange contrast to the peaceful scene, the cloudless sky, and happy faces around me. They were remarked, they were noticed, and fuel was added to the flame. Then the kind endeavours of my friend strove to direct the atten-

tion of the company from my wayward mood, but this only made matters tenfold worse; for I saw his well-meant, though mistaken, kindness, and spurned the idea that *I* should be an object of pity or compassion to any being of the human race.

This, however, was as nothing to what was yet to come. She, who by a single look could have calmed the tempest of my soul, was far away, and I saw no more of her till the party assembled at the entrance of the Sybilline Cave. There I found Ellen and Di Portici engaged in an animated and interested conversation upon the authenticity of the surrounding ruins—the House of Horace—the Villa of Mæcenas—and the Temple of Hercules. This had recently been matter of serious controversy among the antiquaries of the age, but Ellen and Di Portici were agreed upon the subject, and their sparkling eyes and animated looks showed how eagerly they

contended for the genuineness of these classic remains of antiquity.

I had never seen Di Portici look so handsome—and the sight, with the attitude in which he stood, half encircling the slender waist of Ellen, under the pretence of raising her to view more easily the distant pinnacle of a ruined tomb, did not serve to dissipate the blackened feelings of my mind. An appeal was made to the individuals of our party as they approached. All joined in condemning the idea of scepticism as absurd. Infidelity itself could not have been viewed in a worse or more abhorrent light. I alone ventured to dissent from the opinion thus expressed—I pointed out the impossibility of the theory maintained, in a manner that must have satisfied any but a strongly biassed and prejudiced mind. My only answer was a smile of incredulity. Perchance I spoke in a discontented, sullen mood, for the spirit of

contradiction breathed within me, and all that I cared for, was to support a theory opposite to that which Di Portici had advanced. I got little thanks, however, for my pains. He triumphed; *I* was laughed at; and the smile, apparently of meaning, that passed betwixt Ellen and him cut me to the soul; it seemed to speak as plainly as words could have done of *pity* for the speaker, and of private intelligence between themselves. Had they told me I was mad—that my intellects were deranged—that I was an idiot or a fool—I could have borne it all; but this sort of passive coldness, this silent pity, this "speak not lest we make him worse," was more than human nature could endure. In the agony of passion I smote my forehead with my clenched fist, and rushed down the steep side of the hill before me with a maniac's speed. Scarcely, however, had I entered the grove which skirted its

base when Edward was at my side. I deserved not this kind attention. I turned upon him with a furious glance, and would have smote him to the ground, but the calmness of his aspect, the mild yet friendly compassion depicted upon every feature of his face, at once disarmed me of my rage, and I stood before him with my eyes bent upon the ground, the very picture of a spoiled and wayward child, when brought to the full knowledge of its fault. The storm had passed, and a temporary, if not a settled calm succeeded.

Edward spoke not a word, but advancing towards me, took me kindly by the hand and gently drew my arm within his. We then proceeded slowly to the opposite extremity of the wood, till a long and beautiful vista opening to our view, disclosed the still splendid ruins of a magnificent temple adorning its extremity. Then Edward first opened his

lips, and his conversation was upon the imposing grandeur of the ruin we beheld. There was no allusion to the past; he appeared not to have observed it, and I was grateful for this forbearance. I gently pressed the arm within which mine was clasped—the pressure was returned—and we understood each other better then the multiplied explanations of a century could have enabled us to do.

Edward Dinwiddie was one of those strange compounds, so seldom met with in the world, and with a thousand wild schemes and mad ideas ever uppermost in his mind, was in reality endowed with much rare talent, that occasionally shone forth, like a diamond from its parent mine, and with a heart, where discriminating kindness and affection could only be equalled by that steadiness of attachment which eminently distinguished one apparently so volatile and thoughtless.

When we had passed the ruins of the

temple I have mentioned, we once more came within sight of our friends. They were, however, far distant, and apparently directing their steps towards the remains of a bridge, which still hung over the stream, that flowed on its peaceful and undisturbed course, while all was ruin and devastation around it. A projecting rock for a moment hid them from our view—and during that moment a scream so fearfully wild and sudden resounded through the wood, that the warm current of life within my veins seemed to stagnate at the sound. The voice, however, was familiar to my ear, and I darted forward with a speed that soon enabled me to outstrip my companion. When I reached the bridge, what a sight was presented to my view! The fever of my mind had scarcely yet subsided, and now I beheld that which was not likely to allay the tempest, or induce it to subside into a lasting calm. Ellen, dripping like a Naiad, rested within the

supporting arm of Di Portici, and he, scarcely less wet, hung over her with a look of enamoured fondness that spoke daggers to my soul. Every voice was loud in the praise of the deed he had achieved, and from these voices I learned that the treacherous fragment on which Ellen, in the lightness of her heart, had placed herself, to obtain a more perfect view of the ruined bridge, had given way, and she was precipitated into a deep and dangerous pool beneath. Di Portici had sprung into the water, and, at the risk of his own life, rescued her from perishing. I cursed the destiny which had caused my absence at that moment—I cursed it aloud, but no one heeded me; for they were too busy lavishing interminable praises upon one who scarcely seemed to heed them more than I did.

"Who," I exclaimed, in a voice of the deepest indignation, "who would not have done the same, and felt himself honoured in

being made the instrument of rescuing so amiable a being from the passing danger of the moment?" While I spoke I approached, and sought to aid Ellen, but my attentions were quietly, but gently, very gently, repelled. She looked on me, methought, with somewhat of a reproachful look; then, raising herself from the supporting arms of Di Portici, she thanked him, in the warm and fervent language of a grateful heart, for the life he had preserved. His eyes beamed with a look of happiness that the lapse of hundreds of years has not been able to efface from the tablets of my memory. He sunk upon his knees, and, totally unmindful of the presence of any one, imprinted many a warm and fervent kiss upon Ellen's hand. She smiled, but did not attempt to withdraw it until, the exuberance of his joy having subsided, with a calm—a serious—an affectionate air, she bent forward, and gently touched his fore-

head with her glowing lips. I cannot describe the feelings which I then experienced. The earth—the air—the heavens themselves—reeled around me. It seemed as if all nature had been shook by some vast and fearful earthquake. A dimness overspread my sight, and I saw not that the kiss thus bestowed was the rich gift of sisterly affection. A maddened fury seized upon my soul, and I rushed from the spot as if pursued by beasts of prey, while I bore with me the intolerable agony of a thousand serpents preying upon my vitals and gnawing at my heart.

In this accursed mood I reached our dwelling, and, darting into my chamber, closed the door, secured its fastenings, and threw myself, in utter agony and despair, upon my bed. It were no easy task to describe the sufferings of that single night—I loved with the fervor of attachment which none but those who are born beneath the climates of the sun can feel

—I believed that my love was set at naught —myself despised, laughed at, and triumphed over by a favoured rival, who enjoyed all the bliss that I had so recently conceived to be my own; and every pang of maddening jealousy that had slumbered within my breast for many a lengthened year and age, broke out, with a force as wild and uncontrolable, as that of the mountain stream when its swollen and overcharged torrent rushes along, bearing ruin and destruction in its reckless speed.

I was not conscious of one minute's repose in the long interval of the black and dismal night. Yet I was not awake. I lay in a disturbed, restless, feverish sleep, and during the whole period of it experienced a fearful consciousness of the absolutely agonized situation of my mind. I tossed restlessly to and fro. My soul wearied for the dawn, yet I breathed the wish that a morning,

which could only bring with it the undivided knowledge of wretchedness and woe, might never arise. At last it came—smiling in its own calmness and beauty, and then I closed my eyes upon it, for the only idea I could form was, that its sweetness mocked at the misery of my heart. To my distempered fancy, too, the angels of another and a blissful world appeared to gibe at me, as if *my* soul had already been thrust for ever from their society, and consigned to the regions of horror and despair—as if one, within whose breast passions so fearfully destructive dwelt, could have nothing in common either in heart or life with them. In deep dismay I turned away from the dawning light, and buried my face in the pillows of my bed. I sought a sense of forgetfulness of all around. I sought sleep, that I might forget myself. But in vain; sleep fled from me. When I closed my eyes, the image of Ellen stood before me—

but she mocked not, gibed not, as others had appeared to do. No; she regarded me with a look of calm pity, methought of ineffable contempt, and then reason tottered on her throne. I sprung from my bed of thorns with a maniac's haste; I clasped my hands upon my burning forehead, and uttered a wild despairing cry. I rushed forward, and would have dashed my head to pieces against the walls of my chamber, but I was arrested by a startling sight. It was the resemblance of my own deathlike, haggard countenance, reflected in a bright and polished mirror. The sight calmed me in an instant—I scarcely knew my own features.—The lips—the cheeks—the forehead—were of a pale and ghastly hue;—the eyes sunk and hollow, and shining with a fearful and unearthly light; while a wild and demoniacal expression lived within them, telling how deep those feelings from which it sprung were seated in the heart.

I was shocked, deeply shocked at the sight exhibited to my view.—I asked myself if the ravages of earthly feeling and passion could work so fearful a change in the short space of one night. "Would," I exclaimed, "that I were free from a world where the heart of man is subject to changes so tempestuous—where the inward thoughts and feelings of his mind, revelling in their own unsubdued fury, like the hidden earthquake, only shew their effects by the outward appearance of his shattered frame. When—when shall this wretched being cease?"

I buried my face in my hands; the remembrance of past events crowded upon my mind—I wept like a child: yet these were not the tears of repentance; they were but the tears of bitter agony and remorse. Then I recalled to mind the days of a hundred years—and if it could have afforded any consolation to my wounded spirit to know that all I now doated

upon must pass away like a tale that is told, the memory of those days might have spoken the words of peace and stillness to my heart. It spoke not, however, in language so eminently strong; yet, like oil thrown upon the stormy waters, it allayed the first fury of my wayward passions; a calm, a sullen calm succeeded the fierce and fiery turbulence of their sway. By a strong effort, I banished from my features every trace that still remained of the tempest and its effects; and the day being far advanced, I hastened to join the circle of my friends.

They were still at their morning meal, and, as I entered the sunny parlour, greeted me with their cheerful welcome. There was but one accustomed voice which sounded not upon my ear. It seemed to me as if it would not mock the sadness of my heart by the ill-timed gaiety of its tones. And yet Ellen was there! I looked around, and I saw her, where the

woodbine and clematis, and a thousand other perfumed flowers, were clustering on the trellis-work of the open window, her cheek resting on her hand, in a melancholy and musing attitude. I watched her countenance, and if it told aught of her meditations, there would have been no mirth or gaiety in her tones. I approached her, and held out my hand: no word passed my lips, but she seemed to comprehend the meaning of the action—she returned its gentle pressure—almost imperceptibly returned it, yet I felt there was kindness in her touch. She raised her eyes, and methought an expression of calm and tranquil happiness crossed her countenance, and for a moment banished the traces of sadness and sorrow I had remarked as lingering there. She was pale, indeed, very pale, and seemed to have passed a sleepless night. But Ellen spoke not—thought not of herself—and, as she gazed upon me, the passing calmness of her look vanished almost instan-

taneously, and was succeeded by an appearance of alarm.

"You are ill!" she said, in a low but deeply interesting voice, which, shielded as we were by the projecting angle of the window-frame, could be heard by no other in the room.

"No! Ellen"—I answered in the same tone—"*not ill,* at least not in body. If aught ails me, the disease is of a mental nature, and the remedy is hopeless as—" I paused.

"As what?" she enquiringly asked—

"As the disease is incurable," I hastily added, and turned away, for at that moment I saw Di Portici approach, and I had no wish to raise a single pang in *his* bosom, by the idle display of a confidential intercourse with the object of his idolatry. But I felt soothed and gratified by the result of this short—this passing interview. Why it should be so, or why my bosom's lord should sit more lightly on his throne, I cannot tell. This I know, that, as I

turned from Ellen, the remembrance of the mild, the affectionate look that accompanied her words spoke volumes to my heart. A weight was lifted from it, and as I gazed upon the fair landscape in my view, it appeared as if the bright sun had but now burst forth on the darkness of a long and dreary night, and with his cheerful rays illumined every feature of the surrounding scene.

How strange a compound is the heart of man! How very a trifle raises it, buoyant as the light cloud of a summer morn, to the blue skies of hope: how very a trifle casts it down even into the very depths of anguish and despair. I was cheerful—comparatively speaking, very cheerful, and the change upon my manner and appearance did not seem to pass unnoticed by my ever kind and affectionate friends. A corresponding cheerfulness disseminated itself over the whole circle, and, for the moment, we were happy. My heart

appeared to have returned unto its quiet rest, and, after the troubles of a mighty storm, again to have found stillness and repose; again to slumber in the security from which it had been so rudely and so fearfully aroused.

Had this state of listless security continued, a scene of deep and agitating interest might possibly have been spared. Many an unavailing regret, at least, would have been unknown to me, when no tears, no sorrow, could replace that which had for ever passed away. Yet, why should I repine? These unavailing regrets—these hours of sorrow, it is true, would have been unknown; but so, too, would many a blissful day of happiness and peace. And shall we receive good at the hand of Him who giveth it, and shall we not receive evil also? I must not, however, anticipate. Away—away—ye fond delusive visions that crowd upon my sight, and mock me with the fantastic appearance—the unreal shadows of all that has

been buried in the silent grave, during the course of many a revolving year.

Di Portici passed the window at which Ellen stood. As he passed, he lingered for a moment, and I saw him kiss his hand, and pluck a half-blown rose from its stem, and gently throw the unconscious flower towards her: it clung for a moment to her dress, and then fell upon the ground—she stooped, apparently as unconscious as the flower itself, to pick it up. In silence she gazed upon it—methought she was about to place it in her bosom, and I felt the dark thunder-cloud again lower upon my brow. But in an absent mood she tore it leaf from leaf, she threw it as a trifle to the winds, and the sunshine of my countenance still remained unclouded as before.

"Alas! my poor flower," said Di Portici, as he entered the apartment—"my poor despised

flower!—no disappointed nightingale could have treated the object of its former love with more cruelty and despite, than these fair hands have treated thee. But come," he added, as he rifled another sweet flower just bursting from its pod, and presented it to Ellen, "this can boast of undecayed freshness and beauty, and the cruel nightingale will not destroy it, as she has done its brother."

Ellen smiled at the sally of the light-hearted youth. "No," she exclaimed, as she received the bud and placed it in the girdle which encircled her slender waist, "no—this is too young to create the jealousy of the nightingale—the other was full-blown and beautiful, and I dared not expose myself to a rivalry so dangerous."

There was little in this, but methought it was said with a meaning, which gave every word effect, and I again felt an uneasy restless

sensation agitating my heart—a wish that Di Portici were any where but on the spot on which he stood. He, however, seemed to be totally unconscious of those feelings to which his presence and his speech had given rise. He was received with a warmth of affection, which, to my jaundiced eye, appeared to be uncalled for and unbounded. He was quite at home, quite happy, and, in the buoyancy of his youthful feelings, rattled on with a thoughtless mirth that made him an object of envy to at least *one*, while it evidently endeared him to every other, member of the party.

The attentions of the Count, however, were still directed to Ellen. With her he conversed, and to her his delicate and well-turned compliments were addressed. His conversation she seemed to appreciate, and, to judge by the smile upon her countenance, his sallies afforded her amusement. Sometimes he spoke in an

under and apparently confidential tone, and, on these occasions, it seemed as if a look of meaning passed between them, and my heart was once more on fire. Again, in all its Satanic majesty, the dark cloud of jealousy sat upon my brow—and the writhing serpents of despair twined around my heart. I was restless—I was agitated. I arose, and paced the room with a hurried and uncertain step. Edward approached, and in a whisper besought me to be calm; but at that moment, I passed the recess where Di Portici and Ellen stood—I heard one single word uttered—that word was "love." I looked around, as if to strike them to the earth with the lightning of my glance. I saw Di Portici gaze with fondness upon Ellen. A beautiful smile lighted up his handsome countenance with an expression of happiness and delight. He took her yielding hand—he sprung lightly through the open casement, she followed, and resting familiarly upon his arm,

they wandered onward, apparently in earnest conversation, and were soon lost to view in the thickness of the shrubbery by which our dwelling was surrounded.

I cannot, even at this distance of time, forget the agony of that moment. The hopes of many days—hopes which had been unconsciously cherished, like so many consuming fires hid beneath a deep and waste wilderness of snow, seemed at once, and for ever, to be destroyed. The pain of crushed and blighted affection is at all times enough for the human heart to bear, but to witness the happiness of a successful rival is surely more than it can stand. Ten thousand devils seemed preying upon my vitals; my temples throbbed even to bodily pain and agony; every pulse beat with unceasing rapidity in its place; the boiling blood within my veins flowed as if it would burst from the natural limits of its channels; the light of day seemed to disappear from my

sight; and scarcely knowing, assuredly not caring what I did, I rushed from the apartment, and, ascending to my room, wept—aye! *wept* like a child, over blighted joys and crushed and ruined hopes.

CHAPTER VII.

" ——— the full and silent heaves
Of lovers' hearts when newly blest,
Too newly to be quite at rest."

MOORE.

No merely human frame could long have withstood the effects of those agitating tempests of the mind, to which, for many days, I had suffered myself to be exposed. Even mine—of lasting and enduring mould—was beginning to yield to the influence of their power, and I determined, in my own mind, to escape from the torments I endured, by leaving nothing to the imagination to conceive, but at

once to ascertain the certainty of all I had to fear.

How often is it that the agony of despair will force from the lips a confession of those yearning affections, which, but for it, might have lain for ever buried in the innermost recesses of the heart! In the calm hours of sunshine and prosperity we bask in the smiles of those we love, and fear, by any sudden or precipitate motion of our own, to disturb the beauty of their stillness. Let these smiles disappear, and the cold frowns of distrust or doubt occupy their place; then, feeling that there is nothing more to lose, we arouse ourselves from the dream we have so long enjoyed, and seek to know the certainty of our doom, even although that certainty should bring nothing but ruin and destruction to our hopes. Like the traveller, who, by some fatal accident, finds himself, in an hour of unexpected darkness, suspended over what he

conceives to be the depths of an unfathomable abyss, we cling to our last, our only stay, while a gleam of hope remains—when that disappears, we summon up courage to quit the grasp upon which we had relied, and our reward quickly follows. Like the traveller, we find ourselves at once in security and peace; or, we are as rapidly placed beyond the reach of hope, and left to linger out whatever feeble glimmerings of existence may remain, in the dark abyss of certainty and despair.

It was not long before an opportunity occurred, of putting in execution the determination I had formed. On the day, but one, following the events I have narrated, we repaired once more to view the splendid ruins of Adrian's Villa. I had often wandered through these ruins, in a lonely and solitary mood, for I loved to meditate upon the grandeur of their decay, and indulge in the waking

dream, that, at last, I too should perish. But now our party, which had been planned some days before, was increased by a number of those youthful friends, whom, in the warmth of his heart, the good Mr. Dinwiddie delighted to be surrounded by. We were, indeed, a numerous company, and with that lightness of heart and spirit which the clear pure sky and bracing air of an Italian morning imparts, we commenced our expedition.

Di Portici, as usual, was there; for without Di Portici no party could have taken place. By some accident, the particulars of which I cannot now recall to remembrance, he had, even at the entrance to the grounds, been for moment separated from Ellen. I advanced with a beating heart, but with a calm unmoved countenance, and quickly offered her the support of my arm. With a kind and gentle smile she accepted it, and, while she

did so, a slight passing blush for an instant suffused her cheek. It was, however, as evanescent as one of those swiftly fading tints that for a moment light up the beauty of an evening sky, and, perhaps, I may have been mistaken in supposing it was ever there. I could not, however, be mistaken in the words she uttered. They were spoken in a low and whispered tone, and they fell like music on my ear. "It is long since we have wandered thus." In themselves, they expressed not much; but the voice in which they were uttered—the look by which they were accompanied, spoke to my heart, and I felt a glad, though momentary, sensation of delight tingling through its every pulse. I gently pressed the hand which rested on my arm. The pressure was as gently returned. We understood each other, and from that hour the bond of broken peace seemed to be reunited. How strange is that secret sympathy existing be-

tween heart and heart, and how much may be expressed without a single word having been spoken! I looked around and saw that Di Portici was in close attendance upon a fair countrywoman of his own; a beautiful being, of high rank, and many accomplishments, to whom, in after years, the amiable Di Portici was united. Peace was theirs—for they trode in the paths of virtue, and walked together through a long and happy life, till the decline of their day brought a calm and beautiful sunset with it. But I must not digress in narrating events which threw a colouring over many years of my future life.

During the greater part of the day we revelled, if I may use the expression, amidst the ruins of antiquity, and many an entertaining disquisition was held, and many a wild theory started and discussed, on the various objects and uses to which the apparently

interminable masses before us must once have been destined. In these discussions I took little part, for my mind was occupied with other and dearer thoughts. But Time, passing on in his noiseless course, at last brought an hour of repose. Our disquisitions ended, our discussions worn threadbare, we retired to a beautiful green spot, sheltered by blooming acacias and orange-trees, where the remains of a ruined fountain still played and sparkled, although, like old age, its eye was dimmed, and shone not with the vivacity which, in former years, had been its own. There, amidst the laugh, the song, and the sounding of the light guitar, we partook of a slight refreshment. We quaffed the waters of the pure fountain, and, in playful mood, some of the more youthful members of our party sprinkled them gently in their neighbours' faces. Then, in mimic terror, the offending party fled shouting, from the pursuer's revenge, till the

solitude of these ruins echoed with the sounds of mirth and joy. There was no resisting the infection of the fast spreading spirit, and, ere many minutes had elapsed, we all arose, and our wanderings were resumed. Insensibly we broke off into several small parties.—Ellen and I were again together, and deeply engaged in the history of some events which I had witnessed many years before, and to the narration of which she listened with the most fixed and attentive interest. It was some time before I perceived that we had strayed far into the surrounding woods, and now stood entirely by ourselves. I called aloud, but no voice answered. The echoes of the forest alone returned the shout, but we knew that our party could not be at any great distance, and, turning down another avenue, we proceeded on our way.

The sun was fast sinking in the West. A beautiful rich twilight had begun to spread

itself over every object– the sweet birds of the South poured their rich melody throughout the wood—the air was calm and still, the sky, cloudless as an azure mantle, hung on high—and in that delicious evening hour, earth, and heaven itself, seemed calmly mingling together, without one perceptible effort to make mortals sensible of the change. It was, indeed, a lovely evening—the remembrance of it is deeply impressed upon my mind. Calm, still, contemplative, its beauty would have melted down the heart which had been hardened in the guilt of many years, while it spoke of other and of brighter worlds, of endless and undying peace to the pure and innocent in mind.

We spoke of love—of first and innocent love, of its confiding hopes, its enthusiastic attachment, its changeless and devoted feelings, but not as applicable to ourselves. No, these are feelings that the human heart can

know but once, and, however sincere, however affectionate, its future attachments may be, they can never rival that glorious sunshine burst of happiness and joy, which the young heart experiences, when it is first taught to rest upon a faith as pure and beautiful as its own. With me that hour was past; with Ellen it was yet to come; even now it was upon the wing, and destined to bring with it much of sorrow to her heart.

Gradually, insensibly, I know not how, our conversation became more personal—more warm—more interesting, till in the fulness of a bursting heart, and with all the fierce and fiery warmth of a sanguine mind and temper, I disclosed the whole secret of my love to Ellen's view. At first, the resistless impetuosity of my address alarmed her.—She had come from a cold and calculating land, and knew but little of the fierce whirlwind of passion that fills the breasts of the children

of the East. The natural firmness of her temper, however,—the undeviating rectitude of her mind, soon enabled her to banish every symptom of alarm. She stood, in appearance at least, calm and collected, but her blue eyes were filled with tears, and the beating of her heart, almost audibly, fell upon my ear. I knelt upon the green turf by her side; I ventured to take her hand, and it was not withdrawn from mine.—It was a moment of fearful, tremulous suspense.—The balance was suspended in the air, and I felt as if one word must raise me to the towering summit of my hopes, or crush me for ever, like a worm, in the dust beneath my feet.

"Rise, ———," she at length said, naming me, innocent being, by the only name by which she knew me. "Rise, ———; I will not—I cannot deny that I have been accustomed to regard you—to esteem you, as—a brother:—

but," and her hitherto agitated voice, although gentle, became more firm, more decided in its tone, "I cannot confide my all of earthly happiness to the keeping of one around whom a mystery so deep appears to hang, and with regard to whose sentiments upon the all-important subject of a future life, I am as yet so—so comparatively ignorant."

"And—and Ellen!" I eagerly exclaimed, "were that mystery solved—were those sentiments explained, would you—could you regard me in another light?" I gazed with intense anxiety upon her flushed cheek.—I felt her lean more heavily upon me, as if to support the frame which her trembling limbs could scarcely bear.—The tears rolled down her burning cheeks, and, for many minutes, she struggled in vain to find utterance for her words. At length she spoke, but it was in a subdued and agitated voice.

"It were in vain to say what I might or could do in the event of a disclosure which I am aware never can be made."

"Ellen!" I solemnly, and after a moment's pause, exclaimed, "trifle not, I beseech you, with the happiness of one or both.—There is a mystery—an awful undefined mystery—around me, which no created being ever can solve or know. — But over it I have no control—no power. I am as the frail bark driven at the mercy of the winds and waves, without rudder—and without oar—friendless, unprotected,—upon the wide and changing sea of human life. Yet while I solemnly declare to you that I—I alone—am involved in that mystery, and that no one, save myself, can, in any, even the slightest degree, be affected by it, will you—will you not, dearest Ellen, trust to my honour for that which cannot be explained?"

"I will—I can—I do!" she fervently exclaimed—"Answer me but one question, and

to your honour I will trust." She bent her eyes calmly, steadily, upon my face.—"Has guilt or crime nought to do with this fearful mystery?"

I shrunk—I quailed—beneath that searching glance. The past rose like a smoking sacrifice to my view;—but I felt that I had now gone too far to recede, and boldly, fearlessly I answered, "Nothing!—There is no guilt or crime connected with it—save that which we have all, in common, derived from *my*—from *our* first parents."

There was a deep, a dangerous equivocation in this, but the gentle, innocent being before me suspected no deception.—"I am satisfied!" she exclaimed—"and, oh! would that I could be as easily satisfied with regard to your sentiments upon the fearfully important subject of a bright and glorious eternity, or one of a never-ending pain and woe."

"And, wherefore, Ellen," I answered, in the

enthusiasm of the moment, " wherefore should you not? I would be—I *will* be whatever you desire or wish."

For a moment she gazed upon me with a calm but sorrowful expression in her eyes.—" It is not," she said, " what *I* wish, or *I* desire, but what our blessed Lord himself wills, that you must become."

I knew but little then, and felt less, of the truth of her remark. The natural impatience of my temper, however, rose within me at the unlooked for nature of this opposition to the completion of my hopes. With a forced calmness, and an expression of the deepest, perhaps, for the moment, of a truly experienced humility, I exclaimed — " Yet, Ellen, even you must acknowledge that the Almighty works in a most mysterious way.—We know not—we cannot know the various means which he employs to bring the scattered sheep of the flock of Israel to his fold. But this

we know, that he works by means, frequently by human means, and it may so be that you, Ellen, even you, are destined to guide me in the paths of truth and in the ways of holy light.—Oh! then, I beseech you, cast me not off to wander once more—unloved and unbefriended, in the midst of a cold, unfeeling world.—Be mine, dearest Ellen, be mine—and I shall be all your heart can wish or desire, and follow wherever your bright precepts and sinless example point the way."

She gazed upon me with a warm, a kind, an affectionate look.—All idea, all remembrance of self seemed to be banished from her mind—a gentle smile stole over her beautiful countenance, while she answered, "Dangerous—thrice-dangerous sophistry, indeed.—For years—long years—your God has stood at the door of your heart, and knocked for admittance, but he has been refused; and think you the momentary indulgence of an

earthly passion is to work out that which the united mercies of time have failed, with all their energy, to perform? No—no—no—it cannot—it must not be.—Tempt me, oh! tempt me not! The duties which I owe to God are far above those I can ever be called upon to discharge to any created being."

"Ellen!" I exclaimed, in a firm and solemn tone, "hear me, I conjure you; if it were but for a moment, hear me.—Cast me not thus for ever from you—consign me not to lasting ruin and perdition. Mine has been a strange and wayward fate; and I had long, long wandered through a wide and heartless world, unloved and unbefriended, till I met with you.—Can you, then, again bid me go forth even as I came?—No—no—Ellen, *you* could not do this. I have an advocate pleading for me in your gentle heart.—Oh! yield, then, dearest Ellen, yield to its persuasions. Be mine—and I shall be all you wish.—Your precepts shall

direct me—your example shall guide me—your love shall encourage me in the ways of truth, and we shall tread the sunny paths of life, hand in hand, till the voice of my angel Ellen shall hail, with shouts of joy, the hour when the redeemed spirit of her beloved shall soar away to those mansions of peace where there is no more sorrow—no more sighing—and all tears shall be wiped away from every eye. But "— and my voice insensibly assumed a deep and hollow tone, " cast me off—spurn me from you, and I am lost—for ever lost—sorrow must be my portion here, and death—everlasting death in the world to come!"

I paused—the tears stood in her eyes—they streamed down her cheeks.—Her lips moved, but no sound escaped them.—Her quick-heaving breast betrayed the heartfelt agitation of the moment. " Ellen," I calmly asked, " would *you* have my *soul* to answer for ?"

" Oh, no—no !" she exclaimed, with a wild,

convulsive start, and pressed her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut out some fearful, some terrific object from their view. The struggle betwixt principle and affection had been fierce, though short.—Affection triumphed—for, oh! what principle in the human heart can be so strong as a woman's first and early love? Where the heart is deeply, fondly interested, how readily do we find a thousand plausible excuses for yielding to its wishes.—I saw the impression I had made, and coldly, deliberately, aye! with a coolness and deliberation for which I cannot even now account, hesitated not to take advantage of it.

"Your God," I exclaimed, "your God, Ellen—your faith—your belief are mine!"

She slowly withdrew her hands from her face; she clasped them in the position of prayer, and raised her eyes to the pure, beautiful, cloudless heaven above.

Should the heats of a thousand summers

still beat upon this wretched head, and the snows of a thousand winters bleach it, till each grey hair shall become as white and frozen as themselves, I could not forget her appearance at that moment. Even now, she seems to stand before me, more like a sinless angel from another world, about to take its flight to its own happy home, than a being of this lost and ruined earth.—Her lips moved in prayer, and although the traces of tears still remained upon her cheek, a bright, a beautiful beam of gladness shone in her calm and happy eye, and spread the hectic of its flush over her so recently pale and troubled cheek.—I wound my arm around her slender waist—I pressed her to my heart—I whispered in her ear those words of affection, which can only be understood and felt by her to whom they are addressed. She offered no resistance—she confided entirely in him to whom her virgin heart had been given.—Her head reclined upon my

shoulder, her eyes closed, she uttered no word, and it was only from those feeble and indistinct murmurs which speak, not to the ear, but to the heart, that I knew I was no longer an outcast upon earth, but rich in the possession of what the world so rarely can bestow—the best affections of a young and virtuous heart.

It will be asked by many if I was not *happy* now? I answer, no!—The curse was upon me, and, even in the midst of my brightest hours, the deadly feeling pressed upon my heart, that, one by one, I must witness every joy on earth fade away—all that I loved pass into old age, and perish before my eyes.—This thought came not to crush, but fearfully to blight my fondest hopes, even in the fairest beauty of their spring; and I bowed beneath it, acknowledging the justice of my punishment, and breathing the hope that the corroding misery of my heart might yet prove an

offering of sweet savour in the sight of Him against whose laws I had so fearfully offended.

By others I may be blamed for the duplicity of my conduct.—I may be scorned for seeking to gain the affections of an amiable being, with whom I could feel—possess—enjoy nothing in common upon this earth.—To these I answer, that, in addition to the curse of life bestowed upon me, they must remember that every feeling which could elevate or depress the human heart, still burned in its fullest vigour within my breast. The lapse of years had neither quenched nor dimmed them, and if these feelings were somewhat tempered by the depth of thought, they were not more so than those which inhabit the breast of him whose lessons in wisdom have been confined to what the limited period of three score years and ten can teach.

Besides, who could I injure by my love?—None—none but myself.—There was nothing

blighting or corrosive in it.—Ultimately, it would bring hours of wretchedness and woe to *me;* but for this was I *doomed!*—I might weep over those I had loved, but *they* could never mourn for me.

Ellen yet reclined upon my shoulder—my arm still wound around her slender waist, when the stillness of the evening air was broke by a voice calling aloud our names.—A rustling of the leaves—a light and buoyant footstep was almost immediately thereafter heard, and Edward Dinwiddie, bursting through a thin copse of brushwood, stood in view, a mischief-loving smile upon his countenance, and a peculiar expression of inward mirth shining from his eyes.

"So—so, my friend," he exclaimed as he approached us, "the rank clouds of jealousy, and the little storms of life, are over now, I ween!"

"Yes, Edward, I trust, and for ever!" was

my answer, as I extended my hand, in the warm feelings of the moment, towards him.

"I am glad of it," said Edward, laughing, "for, to tell the truth, you have, of late, looked more like a thunder-bolt ready to burst on our devoted heads, than a rational and sociable being."

"I must, indeed," I answered, "have appeared a very fool in your sight—but—"

"Pshaw! ne'er mind it, man!" he exclaimed, interrupting me, "you are not the first man whose head has been turned by a woman.—Samson fell beneath their toils; and Solomon himself could not escape.—But you, my little demure sister," he continued, turning short to her, "how say you—do you plead guilty to leading this man astray—being a very will-o'-the-wisp to his heart—an *ignis fatuus* to his scanty portion of intellect—and—and—I am at a loss for another metaphor, so what do you say to the charge?"

When Edward had first appeared, Ellen instinctively raised herself from the position in which she had hitherto reclined, but she still clung to my arm, as if for that support which her trembling limbs could not afford.—The increased weight with which she leant, when the rattling youth had finished his remarks, told me of the agitation under which she laboured. Her cheek—her neck—burned with the most glowing blushes; she drooped her head upon her breast to hide her countenance from sight, and rapidly as the heavy drops of an evening shower, when the air is hushed and still, the tears rolled from her soft eyes and fell in torrents to the ground.

Edward was moved.—His heart was the very birth-place of kindly and affectionate feeling.—He ceased his raillery at once, and, approaching his sister's side, gently drew her disengaged arm within his own. She smiled upon him through her tears, and, by a strong

effort, recovering her self-possession in a great degree, we proceeded in search of the party we had left. But Ellen's gentle frame had been too deeply shaken by the mental agitation she had undergone, and I knew by the short convulsive start, the quick involuntary sob, she in vain strove to suppress, when even a withered leaf fell upon the green sward before her, how firmly seated those feelings, which I had dragged from their innermost recesses, must have been. Neither of us spoke—neither of us wished to speak, for a restless, troubled swelling still remained, to tell that the breath of a sudden change had recently been upon our hearts, although that wild emotion which had agitated both was now past.—Oh! how much of happiness is there in this silent communion between soul and soul! It appears to me to be the mysterious, undefined, language of another world—for in the society of those we love we can

thus pass hours and days, and while no word is spoken—no expression used—no language intervenes—we feel, in the depth of our hearts, that we both understand and are understood.

We soon reached our friends, and, in my present mood, it appeared to me as if a light and joyous mirth had spread its brightness over the countenances of all. On that of Di Portici, indeed, methought a slight cloud, the only one to be seen in the beauty of the still evening, seemed to rest.—If it were so, however, it soon passed away, and in a few minutes he was the same light-hearted, thoughtless being he had ever been.—As for me—how different, how very different were my feelings now to what they had been on this very spot but a few short days before.

The shades of evening were beginning to close around, and we made the best of our way homewards, where we soon arrived. A short half hour was spent in talking over the

events of the day. In this conversation it will readily be believed that Ellen and I partook but little. We sat apart, in the recess of that window from which I had seen her spring so willingly with Di Portici, and enjoyed in comparative silence the communion of our own hearts. We then separated for the night, and I withdrew to my place of repose with a more light—a more happy—a more buoyant feeling, playing around my heart, than I had known for many years. Oh! how undefined, how strange the sensations of affection are!—And yet, what is there in the knowledge, that within another's breast there exists a something invisible — intangible — indescribable — that comes, we know not how, and disappears, we know not whither—to intoxicate the mind of a rational being, and perch it, as it were, on the light pinnacle of happiness and mirth? Strange—strange, infatuated world!

In the silent hours of that night, my imagi-

nation, darting away beyond the realms of time, pictured the hour when the scenes of this world should close. "Shall we, then," I asked myself, "in another and a better world, know and love those we knew and loved in this? Oh! how beautiful, thus to meet where there shall be no sorrow and no separation!"—In my situation, the idea was natural; but a startling doubt came over my mind, when I reflected how little of the future had been disclosed to man. Could it be so—and should we really thus meet? The united wisdom of ages could not answer the question; it was a mystery too deep for the human mind to solve. The hand of unerring wisdom has placed a barrier to the inquiries of mankind, and over that barrier his feeble spirit in vain attempts to leap. It falls back to the earth, from whence it sought to rise, and soon finds that it *must* await the hour when, emancipated from its trammels of clay, and those earthly

vapours that obscure its sight, it shall soar away in the full enjoyment of unbounded knowledge—grasping universal wisdom—at once beholding the mystery of worlds disclosed to view—the hidden cause of every wonderful effect exposed—and all it can desire to know, from the first hour of chaos, forward to the depths of eternity, at one broad glance, laid open to its sight. The heart of man is elevated within him when he contemplates so great a change; but he cannot pierce the veil of futurity, to discover, and his imagination, assuredly, cannot depict, *how sudden*, and *how great* that change will be.

On the following morning, I could not rest till my pretensions were made known to the worthy Mr. Dinwiddie. I obtained the sanction of his approval, for—I hesitate not to say it—I imposed upon the heart and feelings of the excellent old man with a fabricated tale. Long before the rest of the family ap-

peared, our conference was concluded, our arrangements made, and it was settled that in the ensuing spring I should accompany the family to their own wild country, where our nuptials should be celebrated as soon as possible after our arrival.

When Ellen entered the room, I advanced to meet her.—I took her hand, and led her to her father. We knelt before him, while, with an audible, but somewhat tremulous, voice he prayed for a blessing on our heads. The overflowings of a calm and thankful heart rolled down *his* cheeks as we arose; and when the thought pressed upon my mind, that the wanderer had found a home in the bosom of this happy—because good and virtuous—family, *mine* were anything but dry.

We talked much of the future—many wise and erudite plans were formed, and I know not how far our fancies might have carried us, had not Di Portici, in the midst of an ani-

mated, laughing controversy, dropped, as if from the clouds, amongst us. No one had observed how rapidly the day had been passing on the wings of joy—and our surprise was great when the hour of mid-day was announced by him.

His natural penetration soon discovered that something extraordinary had occurred. I wished not that he should be kept in ignorance of the event, and accordingly, at my request, Edward Dinwiddie took an early opportunity of making him acquainted with the contemplated change in the prospects of Ellen and myself. I cannot help looking back on this period of my life with a feeling of the deepest regret, when I reflect on the difference exhibited in the conduct of this excellent young man when compared with my own in a somewhat similar situation. No mean, no petty jealousy had a place in *his* heart. No rancorous feeling betrayed itself in any part of *his*

conduct. He was evidently subdued in spirit—vexed but not mortified—grieved but not displeased—and when he wished me happiness, and long life,—aye! *long life*,—to enjoy it, the open frankness of his manner, and the kindness of his expressions, won my heart. I saw him now when the dark veil that hung betwixt us was removed from its place; the jaundiced hue of jealousy and suspicion no longer intervened, and we soon became better friends than we had ever been before.

It was not until long after this period, however, that I became acquainted with the full extent of the sacrifice he had made. He had proposed and been rejected—gently, kindly, but firmly, rejected. His own good sense shewed him the folly of farther persecution and pursuit, and Ellen had the good fortune to convert a warm and ardent lover into a kind and tender friend. He lost no opportunity of forwarding any object she had in

view; and now that he knew the situation in which I stood with regard to her, his many acts of kindness and attention were equally extended to me. I know not that there can be a more sure testimony of a great and noble heart than conduct such as this. He who can thus forgive, and with kindness appreciate the confidence of a successful rival, is worth winning as a friend.

In the mean time, my heart was still too full—too agitated—calmly to enjoy the blessings held out, so prominently, to its view, and I was glad when the shades of evening, beginning to close, afforded me an opportunity of effecting an unobserved retreat. I wandered, as I had often been in the habit of doing, towards the Egerian Valley. I passed the fountain of the Nymph, and, reaching the tomb of Cecilia Metella, leant in silent meditation against its base. All was calm and silent around me. The beautiful stars of

the evening had begun to shine forth with that brightness peculiar to the autumnal skies of a southern land. Not a breath stirred the leaves of the few trees that were thinly scattered through the valley; and while I gazed upon those darkly bright skies, and the still landscape that lay sleeping beneath their beauty, a sensation, approaching almost to holiness, stole over my mind, and calmed the agitation of my soul. I thought of the future, and how blessed for many years I yet might be. My fancy anticipated the hour when Ellen should be mine; and I even *dared,* fool that I was, to indulge the hope within my breast, that, when our union should be dissolved, the course of time itself might be run, and I too—the *doomed*—the *damned*—would then repose in peace.

Such were my meditations—such the sinful anticipations in which I dared to indulge. Alas! we know not what a day—an hour—

may bring forth.—My hands were clasped upon my breast—my eyes were raised on high—"Yes, dearest Ellen," I exclaimed aloud,—"yes!"—But what I would have said was stifled in its utterance—my head was enveloped in a dark and thick cloth, my arms were pinioned to my side, I was seized by many hands, carried a few paces with a hurried step, and finally placed within a carriage, into which two of my conductors followed, and we drove off at a speed that threatened the immediate destruction of the crazy vehicle in which we sat.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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THE

DOOMED.

"AND BE ALONE ON EARTH, AS I AM NOW!"

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE DOOMED.

CHAPTER I.

' Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust."
SAMSON AGONISTES.

' Oh for the giant race, to help me heave
Those mountains up; that I might burie this
Proud structure and myselfe."
D'AVENANT'S JUST ITALIAN.

FOR some time our journey was pursued with the same undeviating speed, until, at length, being, as I imagined, out of the reach of pursuit or observation, our pace was gradually

lessened, and the covering which had been thrown over my head was withdrawn. I then saw that I was in a close carriage, and that my companions, whose countenances I could not perceive, were clothed in long garments of a sable hue. I enquired, in a stern and impatient tone of voice, the meaning of their behaviour, but I could obtain no answer from these dark and silent beings. I reiterated my enquiries; still all was silence; and these two, in the calmness of their repose, and the motionless attitudes of their bodies, seemed more like the shadowy beings of another world than creatures of flesh and blood. I screamed in their ears, I shook them by the shoulders, but no attention was paid to the extravagance of my demeanour.

"Can it be," I whispered to myself, "that I am enclosed with the senseless dead?" The thought calmed me in a moment, for there is a fearful instinct in the human mind against

so close a contact with those whose vital principle has fled. In the death-like stillness of that calm, however, I heard the heavy but suppressed breathing of my companions, and I felt re-assured. Again I renewed my questions—I renewed my screams—and from one violence proceeded to another, until at last, without uttering a single word, the two, by a simultaneous movement, secured and pinioned down my arms, and once more gagged me with the thick cloth which they threw around my head.

I had now time for reflection, for I was so bound that I could neither move nor speak, and, indeed, could scarcely breathe. But thought was agony to me—for I had been torn from all I loved, in the very moment of anticipated bliss. I gnashed my teeth, and struggled in the very weakness of impotent revenge; my struggles were of no avail, and I was constrained to abide where I was with

the faint hope of obtaining succour when we reached our journey's end. It was indeed a faint hope.—Several times we paused to change horses; on these occasions the blinds of the carriage were drawn up by my silent companions, and ere many minutes had elapsed we again proceeded on our way.

At length we paused for a longer period than usual, and methought a more than ordinary bustle seemed to ensue. I heard the opening of many locks, the withdrawing of bars, and the harsh grating of a heavy gate upon its hinges. Then the carriage slowly rolled over a paved way, the gate was closed, and the bolts and bars were again thrust into their places, with a clang that fell upon my heart.

I was quickly conveyed from the carriage and hurried along many passages, and down a long, winding stair, until at last I heard a door unlocked; the covering was then

removed from my head, and, by the faint glimmer of a lamp carried by one of my conductors, I saw that we stood in a dungeon about eight feet square. I had little time to repeat any of my former questions, for, in less time than I take to narrate the circumstance, my guide withdrew, and I was left the sole inhabitant of that melancholy place.

I meditated long upon my situation, and exhausted my fancy in vain surmises as to the cause and nature of my confinement.—There was a fearful stillness in every thing around, and not a sound was heard which might help to indicate the situation or character of my present habitation. "Portici!"—the thought flashed across my mind like lightning, but was as instantly dismissed.—"No—no—it could not be—he was not a man to take so wretched and miserable a way of gratifying disappointed affection, or revenge."—"But who, then, could it be?"

was the question which continually occurred —"Who could have done this—where am I —and wherefore am I here?—" until, exhausted with fruitless conjectures, aided by the fatigue of body and mind I had recently undergone, I laid me down upon my scanty allowance of straw, scarcely sufficient to keep my limbs from the pressure of the hard and flinty stone of my dungeon floor, and soon fell into a sound and refreshing slumber.

The pampered sons of luxury may, perhaps, smile at the idea of a refreshing slumber in such a situation. They cannot imagine a sound repose apart from beds of down—but let them know that it is not the softest bed that brings the soundest sleep or the fairest dreams. Jacob's pillar of stone, and his bed upon the cold earth, at Bethel in the land of Canaan, formed a brighter and happier resting-place than the most superb couch upon which monarch ever reposed. A bed of state

may be a bed of thorns—but *his* was a bed of peace.

I know not the hour when I again awoke, for, in this damp and frightful place, night and day were alike. I heard a low moaning sound. It was the voice of pain—the voice of suffering—and it fell fearfully distinct upon my ear. Again it was repeated—again; and then a cry—a shriek, long, piercing, wild—as if the human frame were sustaining the very excess of agony and torture—rung throughout the place; then all was silent for an instant, and again the low moaning sound was repeated, but this time it sounded not like the voice of one who strove to repress the external signs of pain, but like that of one worn out and exhausted by suffering, whose strength could no longer bear him up against the calamities by which he was assailed. A curdling horror froze my blood. The anticipation of dark events, which "cast their shadows before,"

hung upon my soul. A fearful tremor seized me, and I listened with the most intense anxiety for some, for any, sound—to break the solemn stillness that had succeeded these melancholy cries. A distant step fell upon my ear. It approached nearer and nearer. The bolts and chain of the door of my dungeon were withdrawn; it slowly opened—I sprang forward with the speed of lightning, but the only greeting I met was a rude and violent thrust, which sent me reeling against the damp wall of my narrow chamber, while my visitor quickly deposited a pitcher of water, and a small loaf of brown bread, upon the floor, and took his departure without uttering a single word.

Disappointed and wretched in the extreme, I sunk down upon my miserable bed, and bemoaned my wretched fate. I no longer wished that life, like a fleeting vapour, should pass away. I had now an object in view—an

attachment to chain me to existence, and the very thought of it increased the bitterness of my present regrets. Oh ! how horrible it was, in the very moment of anticipated bliss—when I fondly dared to hope, that the wretchedness and misery of many years was about to be repaid by the happiness and peace of those to come—to be immured, perhaps for the remainder of life, in a dark and loathsome dungeon. There was madness in the thought. Liberty—liberty—was the cry of my soul, but no liberty came. There I lay, helpless and confined, till, in the depths of my despair, I cursed the day on which I first saw the light, and then, like a very infant, I lifted up my voice and wept.

There is a relief in some tears, but mine were of that scalding nature, which scorches the heart fromwh ich they flow, and in them I found no relief. No !—the only consolation I enjoyed, and it may seem a strange one, but

when the limbs are fettered the heart may be free, was, in fancy, to recall some of the hours of my past existence. In the solitude of my narrow dungeon, I again reclined upon the banks of the Ganges with my beautiful Zehlima—I again wandered through the shady forests of Hindostan with that gentle child of Nature; I gazed upon the sun-bright skies of Syria by the side of the haughty Alice, and the Lion-hearted King; I stood upon the walls of Jerusalem with the standard of the Cross unfurled in my hand, and I heard the loud shout of the thousands of armed warriors below, rend the air while it rose upon my ear; I wandered with Ellen—my own Ellen—throughout the environs of Rome. I recalled to mind every word and gesture of one, whom in all probability, I should never meet upon earth again. I dreamt over—I doated on the remembrance of that calm twilight hour, when the blessed certainty of

her love first stole upon my soul; and then, by one of those sudden transitions of fancy which sometimes press upon the heated brain, I depicted her, not mourning for my loss—not weeping over my sudden and mysterious disappearance, but gay—thoughtess—light-hearted, (unlike all that Ellen had been, *or ever could be,*) forgetting, even, that such a being as myself existed, or had ever loved. Oh! there was horror—fearful horror—in the thought; and when it stole over my mind, thousands of grinning imps danced through the darkness of my dungeon, gibing at me—mocking me—and I could not shake it off till I arose, and smiting my forehead, rushed through the darkness of my living tomb, and pressed my burning and throbbing temples against the cold damps that so plentifully bedewed its walls. Thus, day after day, passed away, and I only knew that they so passed, by the repetition of the visits of my jailor,

and of those mingled moans and screams, denoting the extremity of bodily pain and suffering, which continued to salute my ear.

Sometimes, in the madness of the moment, I re-echoed those screams, till the vaulted roof of my prison rung again. But no voice answered to mine, and my cries were totally unheeded. Had I been immured in the abode of insanity, a single one of these cries would have been taken up by the wretched inhabitant of the nearest dungeon, and re-echoed with the wild shout of madness, or the more weak drivel of imbecility, through every apartment of the place, till, by the aid of the sounding whip and cutting thong, order and silence were again restored.

I could not then be immured in one of those abodes of thrice wretched and miserable beings. Still those wild screams continued, with painful regularity, to mingle with my morning devotions, till at length, like the lurid

flash, which, while it glares upon the benighted traveller, only serves to disclose to view the horrors of his situation, the truth burst upon my mind—"The Inquisition!" I started from my straw, in agony, at the very thought—for the words of Edward Dinwiddie, as if they had but that moment been uttered, rung upon my ear—"You are surrounded by those, whose misrepresentation of what you have within these few minutes uttered, might consign you for life to the dungeons of the Inquistion."

For life—and am I *here* for life?—was the first question I now asked myself.—God of Heaven, how utterly wretched was the thought. "And is this my doom," I cried; "to be debarred for ever from the glorious light of day—to sustain the curse of existence, while Time shall continue to run his long—long and undefined career;—and that protracted existence to be passed in this dark and loathsome dungeon—this confined and living tomb! Oh!

how quiet—how beautiful—how peaceful the rest of the grave when compared to this."

But, alas! *I* could hope for no such rest. Even the sinful resource of the utterly wretched and despairing—*self-destruction*—was debarred *me*. No, *I* must live on—*I* must drag through my weary and polluted existence, even when the worst of criminals was mercifully freed from such a curse. The hand of Man could not be raised against the doomed of God, and if *my crime* had been of a dark and fearful dye, surely, surely the punishment I suffered was commensurate in its extent. "Oh!" I groaned in the bitterness of my soul, "is there no forgiveness upon earth!"

No dim or distant ray of hope now appeared upon the horizon of my life, and if, in the innermost recesses of my heart, the thought had ever lurked, that I might be mistaken in the idea I had formed, it was soon, and for ever, banished from its hiding place.

On the following day I heard steps approach my dungeon, at an unusual hour. They came not with the heavy measured tread of my jailor, whose footstep habit had rendered familiar to my ear. They were equally slow, but more light and silent in their tread. The door of my dungeon opened, and three men, dressed in that long dark garb, which I knew but too well belonged to the familiars of the Inquisition, entered. One of them brought a lighted torch, which glared fearfully upon their pale features, as he raised it aloft, the more effectually to aid his powers of vision. By signs the other two bade me arise, and, having clothed me in a garb of peculiar fashion, led me forth into a fresher air than I had breathed for many days.

Silently we proceeded along the narrow passage, and up the winding stair, till we had ascended to where the blessed light of day was admitted into a large and spacious hall,

through four long and narrow grated windows. On the outside of these, nothing but high and dead walls met the view, and told of the double security of the place. I had little leisure, however, for observation; we proceeded to the farther end of the hall, where one of my conductors tapped gently at a low arched door. His signal was replied to from the inside. Silently that low door swung back upon its hinges; a black curtain, which hung across it, was withdrawn, and I found myself in another room of considerable dimensions, although infinitely smaller than the one I had just quitted. It was entirely hung with black cloth, and the only light it could boast of was admitted by one large grated window at the farther end of the room. Below that window an enormous crucifix was placed, and in front of the crucifix, a long table covered with black cloth, at the head of which sat the Grand Inquisitor, clothed in black robes; and nigh

the foot, on the left-hand side, the Secretary of the Inquisition, in the same sombre garb. On the right hand were three empty chairs, each having a large cross embroidered upon the back, for the remaining three Inquisitors; and at the foot of the table was another chair, of a different make and structure, where the criminal, or the suspected person, which terms, in the vocabulary of the Inquisition, bear the same meaning and import, might be placed in front of the Grand Inquisitor. I had leisure to make these observations while I advanced, or, rather, while I was led, towards the latter seat, for, now that I knew the worst, and how little I had to hope for on earth, I was calm, obstinately calm, and determined to allow these ministers of hell to work their utmost will.

I was scarcely seated at the foot of the table, wehn the familiars having withdrawn, the Grand Inquisitor asked the usual ques

tions, of my name—my occupation—my place of residence—where I had latterly been—and many others of a similar tendency; my answers to all of which were regularly noted down by the Secretary. I was then asked—in conformity with the usage of the tribunal, which conceals from the supposed criminal all knowledge of the crime wherewith he is charged, and forces the accused to become his own accuser—if I knew or suspected the nature of the offence with which I stood charged.

"I do not," was my concise and decided answer.

"Recollect yourself," said the Chief Inquisitor, after a short pause—"the Holy Inquisition is merciful to those who confess their crimes."

"I seek no mercy," I answered, "for I am conscious of no guilt which I am called upon to confess to a fellow-worm."

"Indeed!" said the Grand Inquisitor, while a contemptuous sneer played upon his harsh and sullen features; "are you not conscious of having repeatedly reviled our holy religion, and made a mock of sacred things?" He crossed himself with much devotion as he spoke, and La Scala Santa and Edward's whispered caution rushed upon my mind.

"If," I exclaimed, firmly, "the deriding an imposture, and exposing the falsehood of lying monks and rapacious devotees, be a crime, I have committed one. But"—

"Hold!"—exclaimed the Inquisitor, in a voice of thunder—"hold! thou base and abominable heretic—nor pollute these sacred walls with the infamy of thy speech. To one of the many crimes wherewith thou art accused, thou hast confessed. Go on—proceed with thy black catalogue—pour forth the measure of thy iniquities; and it may be, when all is confessed, that the mercy of the Holy Tribunal

shall be extended even to one so vile as thou."

I saw the error I had committed, and hastened to amend it as far as in my power. "I have confessed no crime," I answered firmly, "and I have none to confess."

"What, then," exclaimed the Inquisitor, "you despise our offered mercy?"

"Yes!" I answered, with a scorn I scarcely could suppress, "the tender mercies of your holy tribunal are well known. When the unwary prisoner is entrapped into the semblance of confession, your proffered mercy accords him the depths of a pestilent dungeon, till time shall release the spirit of the sufferer from your grasp. Think you this is mercy, compared to the more speedy termination of his sufferings at the stake? No—no—away with your mercy, and"—I smiled bitterly as I spoke—"lead me to the stake if you will."

There was a momentary pause. At last the Inquisitor, in a low and suppressed voice exclaimed—"There are means by which proud spirits may be bent and bowed, ere that consummation shall arrive."

"I know it," was my answer,—"and these means, the rack and the torture, bear goodly fellowship and kindred with your tender mercies. But know, proud man, I despise your threats as I scorn your offers; and while I stand here, friendless, unaided, and alone, I tell *you*, that if ye but knew against whom your threats were directed, ye would open wide your dungeon doors, and beseech Him, even on your knees, to walk forth, and free you from the blighting desolation of his presence."

I bent down and whispered in the Secretary's ear. He started from his seat and rushed far from me, with marks of terror and dismay on his countenance. He retreated,

still gazing at me, close beside the chair of the Grand Inquisitor, with whom he held a whispered conversation for several minutes.

I believe they imagined me to be deranged, but at length the Grand Inquisitor put forth his hand, and rung a small silver bell that lay on the table by his side. Instantly, with noiseless steps, two familiars entered the apartment, and, at a given signal, I was conveyed from it, but by an entrance different from that by which I had approached.

Immediately on leaving the apartment, a cloth was thrown around my head, so that I could no longer perceive whither I was led. I knew, however, that we were proceeding through a narrow passage of considerable length, at the end of wkich we descended many steps. Then a heavy iron door was opened, and I felt that I had been conveyed to a place where the air was even more close and confined than in the other apartments of

this execrable prison. The covering was withdrawn from my head, and leisure was afforded me to look around. I was in a vaulted apartment of considerable dimensions and of great height. It was apparently embowelled in the centre the earth, for no ray of sunshine ever penetrated into the depths of that fearful chamber. Its sole light was derived from an iron lamp suspended from the roof; and, with the exception of a single chair, and several strange looking instruments, it was totally unfurnished. On that single chair sat the grim Inquisitor we had left behind in the realms of day, and methought, when I saw him, he had but descended to his own more proper place in the regions of the damned.

The dim glimmering light at first scarcely sufficed to shew me the occupations of the demon-like figures, who were flitting to and fro through the silence of the room. At a signal from the Inquisitor, I was led forward

and placed betwixt a red lurid fire which burned upon the ground, and a strange, table-formed sort of instrument, on which a naked human being lay fettered and extended. In front of the fire another sat upon the ground, with his arms bound behind him, and his feet fastened to the earth, close to the scorching embers of the fire.

At once I knew that I was in the place of torture, and I braced my nerves to whatever might befall. It was no unnecessary task, for the sight was one of no ordinary nature. I knew not then that I was merely doomed to be a passive witness in the scene about to ensue, and I know not now whether I would not, in reality, have preferred being an active sufferer in it.

A few words may convey a faint idea, but no language can fully describe the fearful horror of the scene. The nostrils of the unfortunate and helpless wretch, who lay ex-

tended upon the table, were stuffed with a thick impervious composition or paste. A narrow filter was inserted in his mouth, through which quantities of water were poured. Thus, at every breath the sufferer drew, he was forced to swallow his mouthful of water, till at last his swollen stomach and heaving breast shewed the extent of the torture he endured. He struggled fearfully to escape from his bondage, but his struggles were of no avail, except to increase the pangs he suffered. Nature, at length, seemed to be well nigh exhausted, and then these diabolical operations were suspended for a moment, and the sufferer was asked if he would confess his crime. He could not speak, but, with the little strength he had remaining, he shook his head, and clenched his hand, and glared upon his tormentors a look of deadly hatred and defiance. Instantly the torture was again put

in force. Flask after flask of water was poured down the sufferer's throat, to force him to confess a crime, of which, perhaps, he was as innocent as the unborn babe. This was the *mercy* of the Inquisition—this was the sight on which the judges of that tribunal loved to gloat their eyes—"More—more still—give him more! 'twill quench the burning fever of his veins."

Measure after measure was then forced down the wretch's throat—mouthful after mouthful he was compelled to swallow, till, at last, it became apparent, that his swollen frame could scarcely contain more. His throes and struggles were fearful to behold; the suppressed and feeble moans that issued from his heaving breast smote upon the ear. The cords by which he was bound were almost hidden amidst the mass of blue and livid flesh exhibited in his swollen and swelling limbs. Drop

after drop, however, the water was still forced upon him, till, at last, I could bear the sight no longer, and I would have darted forward and smote his tormentors to the ground, but I was withheld by firm and nervous hands. I struggled fiercely, but in vain, to free myself from their grasp. The tormented being, however, saw the object of my endeavours, and, as if actuated by a wish to aid them by his own, he made one last, one fearful effort. But his swollen frame could no longer bear the violence of the struggle. I turned in sickening horror from the sight—for a reft and mutilated corpse was all that now remained in the hands of these ministers of hell.

At that instant a loud appalling shriek burst upon my ear. It came from the squalid being I had observed pinioned to the ground. His feet and limbs, and the lower extremity of his body, were larded all over, and one continued

to baste them with oil, while another kept up and increased the scorching fire, before which the now more than half roasted wretch was bound. While nature could withstand the torture, he had uttered no sound—but his skin was baked and broiled—the fire had reached the bones and marrow of his limbs, and now forced from him a succession of shrieks and screams, that even yet, when I think of them, ring upon my ear. His fortitude gave way under the excess of torture, and in the agony of the moment he yielded to all that was desired of him. He was released from his bonds and hurried from my sight, and I was glad that it was so, for the firmness of my heart returned, and I was determined that no torture should force from me a confession of any crime, so long as I remained conscious that I had committed none which could come under the cognizance of any being of the human race.

At present, however, the strength of my resolution was not tried, for I was merely remanded to my dungeon, and there left, in the darkness and silence of its solitude, to meditate upon the heart-rending spectacles I had seen.

CHAPTER II.

"I suffer'd chains and courted death."

PRISONER OF CHILLON.

From the noise, occasioned by the opening and shutting of many doors, which periodically sounded through the stillness of my living tomb, I conjectured I had numerous fellow-prisoners in these mansions of despair. It was a matter of little moment to me, however, to know that I had companions in misfortune. I saw no one—I heard no voice, not even that of the jailor, who daily brought my scanty allowance of bread and water.

Months elapsed, and no change took place in the unvaried sameness of my situation. The hope of ever witnessing the light of day again, had well-nigh vanished from my heart, and, notwithstanding the love I still bore to Ellen, I had ceased to desire life even on her account—when, one morning, the same unusual bustle, if it may be called by a name which intimates the presence of life and noise, which had occurred previous to my former examination, struck upon my ear.

I listened with intense anxiety, nor was the acuteness of my sense of hearing deceived. My prison door was opened—the familiars entered —I was clothed with a garb similar to that with which I had formerly been adorned, and, once more, led into the hall in which my first examination had taken place. On this occasion, the chief Inquisitor was attended by two others of inferior rank. The procedure in my examination was the same as formerly,

with this exception, that the questions now asked were more numerous—more varied—and more studiedly confused. My long imprisonment, however, had not subdued the natural obstinacy of my temper—it had rather, if possible, increased it, and planted within my heart a firm wish to baffle every attempt of this infernal tribunal, to wrest from me aught that should bear even the most distant resemblance to confession. My answers, therefore, were short and sullen—I knew not why or wherefore I had rendered myself amenable to the jurisdiction of the Inquisition—I knew not who my accusers were—I could give no account of my former life—from what country I came—whither I was going—what my intentions were—or in what rank of life or station in society I had been accustomed to move.

With a degree of savage joy, I beheld the bloodhounds baffled in their pursuit, and I

exulted over them as I would have done over a vanquished foe. I scorned their promises—I despised their threats—I laughed outright when they menaced me with death. I hoped—I wished to provoke them to carry this menace into execution; for I knew that to me a way of escape from death, the friend of the weary and heavy-laden, the sorrowful and sad, *must* be provided, and I trusted the same way *might* afford the means of releasing me from the thraldom in which I had been so long detained.

I had reasoned, however, as many—as *all* under the influence of passion generally do, erroneously. The Inquisitors held a whispered consultation for a few minutes, during which a written paper was occasionally consulted. At last the chief Inquisitor spoke—

"During your recent sojourn in Rome, were you on terms of intimacy with a family of heretics who resided there?"

"I cannot recognize," I answered firmly, "any friends of mine by the term under which you are pleased to design them."

"We shall not quarrel about terms," said the Inquisitor, somewhat scornfully, in reply—"were you on terms of intimacy with a family of *foreigners*, who resided at Rome? —Answer me—Yes or No.

"I was."

"Disclose their names?"

"I will not,"—was my short and decided answer to this last question. I knew not what hidden dangers, to those I now loved better than aught in this world, might lurk beneath it.

There was a short pause.

"You will not!" one of the Inquisitors at length exclaimed—"bethink you that we may possess the power of enforcing an answer to this, and many other questions you have treated with contempt."

"You can possess no power over me," I coldly answered.

"We shall soon see to that!" exclaimed the Inquisitor angrily, while he rung the little silver bell at his side. The familiars entered the apartment, but, at a sign from the Inquisitor, remained at a distance from the table—"The Holy Inquisiton," he continued, in what was intended to be a soothing and insinuating voice, "is merciful, and proceeds not willingly to force. Be advised, then, and voluntarily answer a question, the reply to which can be productive of no injury either to your friends or you."

"It can be productive of no *benefit* either to my friends or me—of that I am sure," I quickly answered.

"To conceal your knowledge, at least," added the Inquisitor, biting his lip, "can be productive of no benefit.—Besides," he continued with assumed carelessness, "it is a

matter of but little moment, as I believe their names are pretty well known already."

"Indeed!" I answered, with a scornful smile.—"There exists no reason, then, why their names should be disclosed by me."

"Nor their place of residence?" said the Inquisitor quickly.

"Nor their place of residence, even if I knew it."

"I mean," said the Inquisitor—"the country to which they have retired?"

A sunshine burst of joy darted through my breast. It was evident that my beloved friends had not been involved in my unhappy fate, and I gladly answered, "Be contented, holy father, with the information, that they are beyond your reach. They are in a happy land, which owns not the sway of your infernal power."

"Sacrilegious miscreant!"—exclaimed the irritated Inquisitor—"is it thus you contemn

the Holy Tribunal? Thy blood be upon thine own head." His hand was raised to give the signal to the familiars in waiting, but he was prevented by one of the Inquisitors, and another whispered consultation took place. During the short period of its continuance, the thought passed through my mind like lightning, that the alleged escape of my friends to another country might merely be a pretence to throw me off my guard, and induce me to make a disclosure which, then, certainly could not have affected them.

I smiled at the shallowness of the artifice by which I had so nearly been deceived, and inwardly determined that the rack itself should not force from me a disclosure, which, by some unforeseen chance, might end in the destruction of my friends. I was not wrong in my supposition.

" If your friends," said the Inquisitor care-

lessly, "are so far beyond our reach, the disclosure of their names can do no harm."

"It can do no good"—I answered quietly.

"You will not then answer this question?" exclaimed he sternly.

"I will not," was again my reply—"You have had the only answer you will get from me."

The words had scarcely passed my lips, when the silver bell was rung—the familiars approached—I was seized by the arms, blinded, as formerly, and conveyed to the place of torture.

On this occasion, as on the former, the chief Inquisitor was there before me; but *I* was destined to act a very different part from that which it had previously been my lot to do.

There was no dull fire burning in the corner of the vault—no half-roasted wretch there—no mutilated and suffocated being

stretched upon a platform of the most excruciating agony and pain—no tormenting demons discharging their pleasing duties with grins of satisfaction and delight. The place of torture contained no one save the Inquisitor, and his familiars,—apt representations of the prince of evil and his attendant satellites,—and myself.

With a dispatch which would have done credit to a better cause, I was seized and stripped of my upper garments. A strong rope depending from the roof, which I had not before observed, was fastened to my arms immediately above the elbow-joints, and in an instant I was elevated from the ground, by means of pulleys, to the utmost height the lofty prison would allow. There, at the distance of many fathoms from the floor, I remained for a moment's space suspended, when, suddenly, the rope below was relaxed, and I descended, swift as the lightning's flash, till

within three feet of the ground, when the rope was as suddenly tightened again with immense violence. I was unprepared for this species of torture, which I had not before witnessed, and the sudden agony of the pain forced me to utter an involuntary scream.—Both of my shoulder joints had been wrenched from their sockets, and the whole weight of my body hung, as it were, dangling upon flesh and sinews. But the weakness of human nature—the suddenness of the pain—which had forced an involuntary cry was past, and I remained obstinately still and silent. After a few minutes, the ropes were removed from above my elbows, and fastened to my wrists. I was again swung aloft, and again the same operation was repeated. My wrist and elbow-joints were dislocated, and the flesh and sinews of my shoulders stretched almost beyond the reach of endurance; still I uttered no scream—no sound—to shew that I was at all sensible

of the agony I endured. A few minutes' pause ensued, and I was again asked to confess. I made no answer but a savage glance of defiance at the stern Inquisitor. Again the ropes were removed from my wrists, and, in less time than I now take to narrate the transaction, fastened round my thighs. Again I was lashed up to the roof of the infernal den, and again was the strong rope relaxed and drawn up with a violence that dislocated both hip joints, even as my arms had formerly been wrenched from their sockets. I scarcely remember anything that happened afterwards; the sensation of agony, arising from the position in which I had been placed, with my head downwards, and my maimed and dislocated limbs hanging in an inverted position, was so fearfully acute as almost to deprive me of sense. Still I spoke not—and but a faint impression, like the remembrance of a painful

dream, now rests upon my memory, of a cordial having been forced down my throat—of having been once more swung by the ancles and the wrists together,—of the rope giving way, and of my falling, in a state of absolute insensibility, to the ground.—A dim flitting of lights around me, beings in the garb of hell, with fiery eyes and distorted visages; and confused cries, like the yells and shoutings of the damned, were the last sights that glanced before my eyes—the last sounds that struck upon my ear.

How long I remained in a state of insensibility, I cannot tell. When I recovered, I was alone and in my dungeon—my tongue clinging to the roof of my mouth, and my whole frame burning with the intensity of fever—"Water—water"—was the half-choked cry I uttered—but there was no one near to hear or aid me; and, in the agony of my soul, I

deemed that the miscreants had left me to rot and perish on my bed of damp unwholesome straw.

I could not, however, endure the suffocating thirst that preyed upon my vitals, without an effort to relieve it. I raised myself from my dungeon floor with difficulty, and dragged my maimed, dislocated, and distorted limbs towards the spot where my scanty allowance of provision was in use to be placed. There I found two loaves and two pitchers of water, from which I concluded that I must have lain for the space of eight and-forty hours, at least, insensible.

With the wildness of despair, I seized one of the pitchers, and, although suffering the most acute agony in the attempt, I raised it to my head, and drained it to the very dregs. The exertion exhausted my small remaining portion of strength, and I sunk back upon the floor, unable to move from the spot where I

had quenched my thirst. I lay there for many hours, and I know not but the moisture arising from the cold stone floor of my dungeon served to refresh my parched and burning skin, and prevent the recurrence of that dreadful thirst from which I had suffered so much. One thing, at all events, was certain —that the fever in my veins had subsided in a great degree, and, after eating a small portion of my brown bread, and applying once more to my remaining pitcher of water, I was enabled to crawl again to my bed of straw.

Notwithstanding the pain I suffered, I soon fell into a deep repose, on awakening from which, I found a new supply of bread and water placed within my reach. These I devoured with an appetite that an epicure might have envied; and I know not if, even when banquetting on all the delicacies of the East, with the rich and powerful of the land, I ever fared on viands so delicious to the taste ;—so

true is it, that even the most forlorn and wretched state is never entirely devoid of some gleam, that speaks of comparative happiness, for the moment, to the heart.

But in the detail of a prisoner's weary hours there is nothing to interest the attention or occupy the mind. The unvarying sameness of every day—of every hour—of every moment—without variety and without change, can afford no picture for the pen of after-years to trace. It has been said, that a short space of time, into which many and varied events and actions have been crowded, appears immeasurably long when looked upon with retrospective eye. It may be so—but sure am I that the converse of this proposition does not hold, nor does the lengthened period of many days or months which have sunk into the abyss of time, without one varied action or event to mark their course, ever appear short to the prisoner's eye.

Days, weeks, months. passed away in the same unvarying dull routine, till, at last, even the dreams of fancy, with which, during the first period of my imprisonment, I had been visited, assumed the dull and dusky hue of my dungeon.

My thoughts had acquired a sameness that was painful; imagination itself was exhausted, and could no longer picture anything new or pleasing to my mind, and I had even ceased to think, when, according to the best calculation I had been able to make, about the end of the first year of my imprisonment, a change, an interlude I might call it, took place, to divert the dreariness of the scene.

Early in the morning of the first Sunday in Advent, as I afterwards discovered, I was aroused from my sleep by the tread of many feet near my prison door.—The bars and fastenings were removed, and the Alcaide, attended by his guard, entered my dungeon.

My eyes had now become so accustomed to the darkness, that, with ease, I beheld every thing around—and the first thing I saw was a habit of a very peculiar shape and texture, with which the Alcaide presented me, at the same time desiring me to array myself in the garb.

I was not long in obeying the order I had received, for my heart danced within me at the prospect of a change.—I deemed that I was about to be led to execution, and the glorious hope of liberty was in my mind;—alas—alas—how soon to be disappointed!

I had no sooner attired myself, than I was taken from my dungeon and led into a long and wide gallery, where I found a crowd of persons clothed in garbs of the same fashion as that which I myself wore. They were mingled, male and female, and ranged in ranks against the wall. At a distance I beheld others stand, but these were clothed in garbs

of a different kind. They were attended, too, by persons whom I instantly recognized, by their long black dresses, to be confessors of the Inquisition. Those whom they attended were dressed each in a robe of grey, on which the portrait of the wearer, surrounded by burning torches, flames, and demons, was painted. On the head of each, a high pointed cap, made of pasteboard, all covered over with devils and with flames of fire, was placed.

I then knew that an *auto da fè*, or act of faith, which, the Inquisitors pretend, exhibits a representation of the Last Judgment, was about to be celebrated, and that those clothed in grey were relapsed heretics destined to be burned. I cast an anxious eye upon my own garb, but instantly averted it with horror and dismay.—It was of yellow, with the cross of Saint Andrew painted on the heart, and I knew that my hour was not come, but that I was reserved for longer imprisonment, and more

fearful torture in this place of hell. The painful truth sunk upon my mind, and I clasped my hands in all the agony of despair. —How gladly would I have changed situations with any one of the condemned race; for then, although the hour of freedom, when my released spirit would fly from its prison-house of clay, could not have arrived, the hour when that dull prison-house itself would be released from the living tomb in which it had been immured, and from the agonizing tortures it had suffered, would be at hand. But no—no —the hope of this had fled.

I was roused from the sullen reverie into which I had fallen, by a familiar of the office presenting me with a long yellow taper. Shortly afterwards, a huge bell began to toll, and the procession moved slowly forward towards the entrance to the hall. A new thought struck me—a new hope entered my heart, as I felt the fresh and reviving air upon

my brow. In the bustle and confusion of the scene, I might, perchance, effect my escape. There was something exhilirating in the bare idea, and I determined to be on the alert to avail myself of every chance. But, alas! how soon was the chance of escape lessened —how soon was the bright momentary sunshine of hope and expectation clouded. In the busy tumult of my thoughts, I had not observed that the chief Inquisitor and his Secretary were seated at the door of the hall, and that, as each prisoner passed, he was consigned to the charge of a particular person, who acted as his guard to the place of execution.

My turn approached, and I too was consigned to the custody of a "Parrain," or "God-Father," as these guards are termed.—Reader—*Di Portici was the man!*—A suspicion of his integrity and truth instantly flashed across my mind, and, without a moment's hesi-

tation, I sprung, like a tiger, at his throat, and tore him to the ground.

"Die—villain—traitor!"—I exclaimed, as, with the momentary strength which madness lends, I raised my right hand on high to smite him on the head. In an instant, ere thought could pass along the mind, I was seized, and torn, foaming at the mouth, from my expected prey. In the confusion which ensued, Di Portici took an opportunity of approaching me, and, unobserved, whispered in my ear, "Fool—you have destroyed your only chance of escape."

I looked on him, and in his melancholy and downcast look saw the truth of what he uttered. In a moment, I became helpless as an infant in its nurse's hands. Bitterly did I repent my own headstrong rashness and folly; but repentance came too late, for I was immediately consigned to a double guard, who, when they viewed my still powerful frame,

took such precautions to secure me, as truly did destroy my every chance of escape.

The procession moved slowly forward, and I was allowed ample time to indulge in the bitterness of my own thoughts. Even then I wondered at, and to this hour I am unable to account for, the unwelcome mercy that left me to my original fate, after the outrage I had committed beneath the eye of the Grand Inquisitor himself. But it was so ordained, and, perchance, meant, by an all-wise Providence, to convey the salutary lesson to my mind, that no act of mine could alter or affect the slightest—the most trifling part of the destiny to which I had been doomed.

We had now reached the confines of the buildings of the Inquisition, and, passing under a broad archway, entered a long and narrow street;—the only change which had taken place in my position, being, as I then observed, that I was assigned a situation infi-

nitely lower than my original one in the procession. I knew not, then, that this was a mark of my increased guilt, as those who are reckoned the most innocent, or rather the least guilty, in the eye of the Holy Fathers of the Inquisition, have the first place assigned them in processions such as these.

As we proceeded along the street, the sharp flints of which it was composed cut and wounded the limbs of the barefooted prisoners, till the paved way literally streamed with blood. But this was either unheeded, or, if heeded, awoke only the mirth and jeers of the hard-hearted spectators of our sufferings.

At length we arrived in a hollow square, formed by the sides of a very splendid and magnificent palace. In turning under the arch-way which led to this square, I had an opportunity of beholding the members of which our procession was formed. First of all, marched a large body of Dominican friars,

to whom this post of honour is always assigned in reference to St. Dominick, their patron, who founded the Inquisition. These were followed by the prisoners, clothed in the San Benito, or yellow garb, each carrying a large taper, and led by his Parrain or God-Father. Next, in the procession, came the unfortunates dressed in the Samaria, or grey robe, with flames and demons, instead of other ornaments, adorning it. These were attended by their Parrain on one side, and by their confessor, administering ghostly consolation, on the other. After them, several familiars of the Inquisition appeared, each carrying a small square box, in which was carefully preserved the bones of those relapsed heretics who had died in prison. Then came the Inquisitors attended by a body guard. After them, the familiars of the Holy Office, walking two and two; and these again were followed by the standard-bearer of the Inquisition, and

a friar bearing a large crucifix, immediately in front of the Grand Inquisitor, who trode in solitary dignity, while a large assemblage of monks of different orders closed the long—and, apparently, interminable—procession.

The imagery of the horrible scene which followed is deeply impressed upon my memory. In the centre of the square, a superb altar was erected, on one side of which, upon a range of elevated seats, the Grand Inquisitor and his councellors sat, and on the other, the Governor of the place with his guard and the officers of his court.

Around the fronts of the buildings, balconies had been raised, for the accommodation of spectators, who crowded in thousands upon thousands to the place; for the *merciful* tribunal takes especial care that no *auto da fè* shall ever be performed, till it has been trumpeted through every district in the land.

The stakes at which the condemned beings

were to suffer, were placed in the centre of the square, near the altar, and surrounded by numerous faggots, placed in the most careful, and I had well nigh said, *tasteful*—order.

The prisoners, soon after entering the square, were seated at the opposite extremity to hear a sermon preached by one of the Augustine monks. When this part of the service was concluded, the sentences of each were read, and those destined to the flames received a slight blow upon the heart from the hand of the Alcaide, to signify that they were *abandoned*. They were then led to their respective stakes, where they were firmly bound. At the same time, a number of images, representing those heretics who died in prison, were likewise bound to stakes, and, at the feet of each, one of the small boxes I had formerly observed, containing his bones, was placed ; as if the hand of death even could not free the prisoner from the vengeance of

the Holy Office—as if the persecution of this most *merciful* tribunal must reach beyond the grave.

A hymn was then sung, in which the greater part of those present joined. The deep tones of the monks, mingled with the sweet thrilling voices of the choristers, and the wild burst of the not unmusical, but less instructed, thousands of the people, had an awfully sublime and imposing effect at that, to many, fearful hour. Now the tones fell so low as scarcely to be heard, and, again, they rose and swelled, till they filled the whole surrounding air, and the first strains seemed soaring even to the blue skies above, ere the last had quitted their birth-place on this earth below.

It was in the midst of one of these rising bursts of melody that other voices joined the song. Wild, fearful shrieks, rose above every

other sound, as the crackling flames shot out their forked volumes, and soared and quivered in the air.—God of Heaven, what a fearful change! Could this service be acceptable to thee?—the cries of the scorched and burning wretches ascending to thy throne with the song of praise! Fearful—fearful! Yet thou searchest the heart of man, and who can tell but, in thy sight, these agonizing cries, torn from the sufferers, rose with a purer melody than the songs of those who had consigned them to their doom.

I gazed not with feelings of joy upon the sight. No self-gratulation filled my heart. I envied those who had, that day, been led to the stake, and there expiated their errors—their obstinacy—or their guilt. I had been spared, but the harsh grating voice of the Alcaide, as he read my sentence, still rung upon my ear—"Imprisonment in the dun-

geons of the Inquisition, *for life.*" For life! —how fearful was the sound—how terrible the prospect now before me.

My limbs trembled, my eyes grew dim as we again entered the precincts of the Inquisition; and, when my dungeon door once more closed upon me, and its locks and bolts again sounded on my ear, I felt as if, living, breathing, moving, I had been torn from the world of life and light, and consigned for ever to the dark and silent tomb.

CHAPTER III.

"What do I hear, ye Gods?"

VOLTAIRE'S SEMIRAMIS

"I'd live whole years of grief and pain
To have my long sleep of sorrow broken
By such benign blessed sounds again."

MOORE.

THERE is but little, as I have said before, in the life of a solitary prisoner, to mark the passing hours. Day after day, month after month, year after year, rolled on in the dim silence of my dungeon, and, through its gloom, no ray of light ever shone to cheer my aching sight, no glimmering of hope to glad the darkness of my heart.

In the events of this world, however, changes happen when they are least expected. I had almost become reconciled to my imprisonment, for habit reconciles the human mind even to that which it has been accustomed to regard with the deepest aversion and the wildest horror. I had, in truth, begun to dream away the remainder of life in a state scarcely conscious of existence—dead, but yet alive; buried in the tomb before the natural hour of immolation had arrived; sunk in the depths of the grave, and *there* left to die; when, about the close of the fourth year of my imprisonment, I was aroused from the state of absolute stupor into which I had fallen, and once more led into the presence of my stern and inexorable judges.

I know not why, upon this occasion, the rules of the Inquisition were departed from in two respects. First, in re-examining a

condemned prisoner—and, secondly, in conducting that examination in the stillness of the midnight hour. But so it was; and I have only been able to account for it upon the suspicion, that some part of my fatal history had been brought to light—somewhat had occurred to corroborate the whispered information I had, rashly perhaps, conveyed to the Secretary of the Inquisition, years before.

There was little change in the aspect of the hall, the same into which I had formerly been led, save that, instead of the light of day struggling through huge bars of iron, and the dimness of stained and painted glass, it was illuminated by the blaze of many silver lamps; and the place of the stern old Inquisitor was filled by one who had numbered fewer years, and on whose countenance some traces of benevolent feeling seemed to linger still.

The procedure in my examination was much the same as formerly. Each answer was

carefully noted down, and the operations of the Secretary were, from time to time, revised by the Inquisitors. I could not devise the reason of so much accuracy being observed—but I had lost all hope of any change taking place in my condition, and, therefore, my answers were more free and unreserved than they had formerly been. I was questioned at various times, as if merely by accident, concerning the events of a period to which the memory of no human being then alive could draw back. On these occasions, I observed that my answers were most carefully noted down, and compared with a variety of papers, which lay folded up on the table before the Inquisitors. My curiosity was aroused, but every attempt to obtain a glimpse of these papers and documents was vain. When reference was made to them, they were not removed from the hands of the Inquisitors, and my position was at the extreme end of

the table which separated us. Even the Secretary had been removed from his usual seat, and occupied one close beside the Grand Inquisitor.

I was thus, in a manner, left entirely to myself, till near the close of my examination, when, upon some slight pretext, I was desired to remove myself from the end of the table to the side, so as to be near my examinators. I did so readily, for, by the change in my position, I hoped to be able to obtain a sight of those papers by which my curiosity had been so greatly roused.—In this, however, I was disappointed; for, in the seat which I now occupied, the light streamed so strongly, and so directly, upon my countenance, as to expose it to the fullest and most scrutinizing search, while I could scarcely discriminate any thing at all beyond. It was obvious, therefore, that the change had been effected in order to enable the Inquisitors more nar-

rowly to watch my looks and scrutinize my appearance during the few remaining questions they had to ask.

Whether the answers to these were satisfactory or not, I cannot tell. Among others, and at a moment when I might naturally have been thought, from the tenor of those which had preceded, to be off my guard, I was suddenly asked my age.

"Count, if ye can," I calmly answered, "the world's age, and, when ye have ascertained the number of its years, ye will not be far from mine."

I could observe no extraordinary emotion—no symptom of surprise evinced by the Inquisitors at this probably unexpected answer to their apparently simple and unmeaning question. A long—a very long—whispered consultation succeeded, in which I could perceive the Chief Inquisitor took a most earnest and decided part. Occasionally, a stray word

fell on my ear, but from it I could gather nothing of the import of the conversation. I sat listlessly and carelessly upon my seat, totally unheeding what might happen. My sole wish was to return to the peace and quiet of my dungeon, for I was tired of the glare of the lamps, and the garish scene I witnessed. " So much," I whispered to myself, " for the effect of contrast. Others, perchance, would deem this a dull and melancholy place, while to me it appears illuminated with the splendor of a hundred suns."

At last the conversation ceased, and the small silver bell, which lay at the Chief Inquisitor's side, was rung. The familiars entered the apartment with their silent noiseless tread; a dark cloth was thrown around my head, and I was again led, as I fancied, to my dungeon. In truth, I cared but little where they led me; for the voice of hope was dead within my breast, and listlessness and despair were

seated, side by side, upon the charmer's throne.

As we proceeded, however, I soon observed that my guide had entered upon a passage different to that which led to my former dungeon. Of this, I took little heed, for I only deemed that an alteration in the place of my confinement was about to be made. But I soon felt the sweet freshness of the midnight air, breathing around me. Oh! how grateful, how delicious to him who, for long years, has inhaled the damp atmosphere of a dungeon, are the first breathings of a pure unclouded sky. The invigorating principle of life is borne upon their wings, and hope and joy come with shouts and dancing in their train.

A crowd of glad thoughts rushed upon my mind, but ere I had time to reduce them to order, or even to the semblance of systematic arrangement, I was hurried into a close carriage, which, apparently, had been stationed

there for the purpose. Two of my conductors followed me, and the doors having been closed, the vehicle was slowly put in motion. I heard it roll over the paved way. I heard those bolts and bars, the sound of which had smote upon my heart years before, withdrawn; the wheels of the carriage echoed through the vaulted archway, the heavy doors closed, the bolts and the bars were again thrust into their ancient places, and I knew that I was no longer within the detested walls of the infernal Inquisition.

"Would," I exclaimed to myself, "that Father Abraham, instead of being seated at the gates of Hell, to prevent the dispersed of Israel's race from entering there, were placed before the doors of the not less to be dreaded prisons of this *merciful* tribunal."

The vehicle, in which my silent companions and myself were enclosed, now proceeded with extreme rapidity. My questions

met with no answer—and, indeed, from the little regard which was paid to them, I might have been warranted in supposing that they fell upon the ears of those who had been deprived of the faculty of hearing.

At our different stages, the blinds of the carriage wese carefully drawn up, in the manner which had been adopted when I was brought to the Inquisition. Every precaution was taken to prevent the possibility of the inmates being recognized; when refreshments were required, they were brought within the vehicle; no unnecessary delays took place, and at the same rapid pace with which our journey had been commenced, we continued to travel till towards the close of the succeeding evening.

At last, we paused in our career. My guards descended from the carriage, and I was led from it in the same blindfold condition in which I had entered it. Immediately I was

seized by either arm, and conducted, for the space of almost an hour, through what, from the suddenness of its ascents and descents, I easily perceived to be a hilly and precipitous country. All at once, my guides stopped short, and I felt their hold upon my arms gradually relax. I was free, standing by myself, and the inclination rose within my breast to flee. But then the question arose, whither, blindfolded, weak, and impotent as I was—whither could I fly? And I was compelled to acknowledge, that, in flight, no chance of escape remained. To my fate, therefore, I resigned myself, and patiently waited till my conductors should again move forward on their way. They moved not:—I spoke to them—they answered not;—I stretched out my arms, they met with no resistance. I hastily undid the bandage from my eyes, and dashed away the cloth in which my head was enveloped. I stood alone, in a wild solitary

spot, deep in the mountain's gorge, and not a shadow of a human being near me. I listened—anxiously listened—but my ear caught no sound. I called aloud—but my own voice, in a thousand mocking echoes, alone answered to the call. There was something fearful in the stillness that seemed to have fallen upon every thing. The broad red sun was setting, far away, behind the shadowy mountains of the West; and not a cloud obscured the golden splendour that the departing monarch cast upon the blue and spotless expanse of heaven's vaulted sky. Not a breath of air was felt—not a blade of grass stirred—not a human being seemed to tread the deserted place; and, as if the birds of the air and the beasts of the forest alike shunned the spot where the fallen and the guilty stood, I had the whole surrounding and glittering expanse of earth, air, and water to myself.

But I was free;—free from the dungeon—

the fetters—and the gyves—and I bounded forward with the extacy of the criminal, just escaped from the due reward and punishment of his crimes. Alas, alas! I knew but little of my own unaided strength, or how feeble and helpless I had been rendered by my long confinement. The exertion was too much, and in a few seconds I fell upon the ground. Then, for the first time, I perceived a small portion of bread, and a bottle of water, by my side. Greedily I devoured the one, and slaked my parched throat, and scorched lips, with the other; and, having thus satisfied the cravings of appetite, I lent back against the trunk of a spreading tree, and soon fell into a sound and refreshing slumber.

In my sleep, a vision came upon my soul; and I saw Ellen Dinwiddie, with the look and aspect of an angel, bending over me. She laved my throbbing temples and burning brow with water from the stream, and sus-

tained my fainting head upon her own gentle breast, I tried to speak, and bless her for her kindness—but I could find no utterance for my words. While I strove, she gazed upon me, with looks of the most gentle kindness and affection; a calm, placid smile played around her lips; a light, but not of earth, sat upon her brow; she pointed to heaven, as if inviting me to follow there, and, spreading two wings I had not before observed, soared, amidst songs and music, to her own bright and blessed home.

I awoke—the morning sun was shining gloriously upon the mountain tops, and I almost fancied I beheld the light and graceful form of Ellen still floating in the air, and heard the sounds of music still trembling on my ear. I shook myself, to dissipate the illusion—I closed my eyes—but, although the form of Ellen no longer blessed my sight, the soft and melancholy notes of music still sounded

there. I started to my feet—the music paused, but in its stead a gentle silvery voice, whose every word was like the breathings of the south wind when it dies away in the heat of a summer hour, broke upon the stillness of the morning. I turned, and saw a youthful peasant standing near me, and beside her, one of those large dogs, trained, amidst the Alpine scenery of these mountains, to lend their aid to the destitute, forlorn, and often dying traveller. Led by a natural instinct of kindness and affection, more alive in his breast than in the heart of man, he had guided his youthful mistress to the spot where I lay. Unwilling rudely to disturb my repose, when she had ascertained that I only slept, she sat down, and breathed those gentle strains of music that had broken so sweetly upon my sleep. Now, however, she advanced, and, while her joyful companion, as if exulting in the consciousness of having performed a good

action, leapt and gambolled around, besought me, with the same silvery accents that had first fallen upon my ear, to accept the shelter of her father's hut. Gladly, indeed, did I avail myself of the invitation—gladly did I lean upon the supporting arm of my youthful guide, and, with her, tread through those wild wastes, and mountain passes, those solitudes of glen and wood, where more true kindness—more genuine affection—more unsophisticated hearts are ever to be found than in the crowded haunts of man. Alas! that the trammels of society—the cold forms of mannerism—should chill the warmth of young and blooming hearts!

It was slowly and with difficulty I toiled along my way. The sudden change, from the damps and darkness of a dungeon to the free air and glorious light of day, had wrought a powerful effect upon my frame. A chill

trembling pervaded every vein, and seemed to sink upon my heart, even while the large drops of perspiration stood upon my brow. My spirits, too, were fearfully depressed. I know not why, but the remembrance of my vision weighed upon my mind, and presented many an evil foreboding of my Ellen's fate. During my long and solitary confinement she had scarcely ever been absent from my thoughts, and, if a single ray of hope shot athwart the darkness of my dungeon, that ray emanated from the light of Ellen's love, and was connected with the vain dream, that on earth we should yet meet again. But now that I was at liberty—now that the dreams of my darker hours had a prospect of being realized—that hope vanished from my mind, and when I thought of Ellen's fragile frame, and the deceitful malady, from the grasp of which she had but just escaped, I could not deem that

her pure spirit tenanted aught but that blessed mansion, which was indeed its own natural abode.

While these thoughts occupied my mind, we descended through a rugged mountain pass, and, turning a sharp angle of the way, found ourselves at once in front of a neat and smiling cottage. It was situated in the centre of a verdant spot, and surrounded by many blooming shrubs and flowers. Behind, the steep broken mountains rose towering to the clouds, and, by their rude contrast, afforded a still more smiling appearance of comfort and content to the vale below. Our companion bounded forward with a sharp peculiar bark, which soon brought the owner of the cottage to its door. He was a stout and healthy peasant, but his white locks shewed that the suns of many summers had shone upon his head.

He welcomed me with frank and open kindness, and blessed his youthful child with the look and tone of one whose heart's treasure was before him. Good reason had that old man to love his child, for a more sweet and gentle being never breathed. Good reason have I to remember her; for, during the succeeding illness of many weeks, she tended me with a daughter's care, and never once allowed a murmur to break from her soft lips at being deprived of all her own innocent amusements, to attend the sick bed of a weary and discontented invalid. Methinks I yet see her light form hovering with noiseless step around my couch. Methinks I yet feel her balmy breath stealing across my pale forehead, as she supported my aching head, and held the cool refreshing draught to my pale lips. Methinks I still hear her silvery voice, enquiring, in its gentlest accents, what could be done to

ease the throbbings of my pain. Oh! what was I that so much kindness should be wasted upon me!

There was another form, too, hovered around my couch—that of Ellen Dinwiddie. But alas! it was only to fancy's eye that it appeared—it was only a creation of the brain; and yet, in moments of delirium, I addressed it, as if that form had been a living and a breathing one, and I fancied in return that it replied to me. In the long hours of sickness it was my companion, and, when returning health restored vigour to my limbs, and I had said the last words of a long farewell to my kind host, and the daughter of his love, it will surprise no one to learn that I bent my steps to the blue mountains of the North; for there, amidst their thousand streams and floods, lay the peaceful home of one towards whom my heart still yearned, as if with all the warm feelings of a first and early love.

CHAPTER IV.

"Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land?"
SCOTT.

"The Devil, therefore, most certainly has a power and liberty of moving about in this world, after some manner or another."
DE FOE'S HIST. OF THE DEVIL.

I JOURNEYED on my way for many months. I encountered perils by sea and perils by land. The place of my destination was afar off, and, when I arrived on the shores of that wild country in which it lay, the calm and beautiful summer was drawing towards its close.

I never can forget the sensation which struck upon my heart when I first trode the

free and beautiful shores of Scotland. I had basked under many a brighter sun; I had seen many a wilder scene; but, when I stepped from the deck of the small and fragile bark in which I had been wafted to the shores of that fair land, and gazed upon its blue mountains, and the deep green sea that laved their base, and breathed the fresh invigorating air that gently fanned my cheek, it appeared to me as if a new feeling of elasticity, a heart-spring of joy and youth had been imparted to my frame.

The spot where I landed was of a wild, lonely, and romantic character. The deep waves of the Atlantic washed its shores, and in the hazy distance many a small island floated on the still deep, as if each were a summer cloud hung betwixt the earth and sky. The morning was calm, serene, and beautiful. No cloud rested on the blue expanse that hung above me. The purple hea-

ther bloomed around, and as I trode upon its fragrant flowers, and felt its elastic spring yielding to the pressure of my feet, I deemed it to be a wilderness of beauty I never could desire to leave.

I knew that the part of the country where I now was could not be very far distant from the abode of those I sought, and I pressed lightly on my way. For many an hour I trode by the base of these wild hills, as they wound along their own beautiful and romantic shores, but no human habitation appeared in sight. The wild fowl and plover fled from me with screams of terror as I approached. The sea-bird dashed from the rocky cliff as I ascended its scarcely to be trodden summit, and plunging in the wave below raised a momentary circle of foaming white around a breast and wings of the same beautiful and milky hue. The eagle soared on high, and from his lone eirie, far beyond the reach of man, with pierc-

ing eye gazed down on all that was passing in the world below.

For a while the novelty of my situation amused and interested me; but these sensations soon gave way before the infinitely more powerful one of increasing hunger, and I was not sorry when in the far distance I beheld a thin column of pale blue smoke, curling upwards from a dense clump of natural wood by which it was surrounded.

I pressed onward towards this appearance of a human habitation with speed, for the day was now considerably advanced, and owing to the many winding creeks and bays I had to traverse the distance was infinitely greater than I had at first supposed. At length, however, I reached the lowly dwelling from which the thin smoke I had so gladly hailed, ascended. It was a miserable hovel at the best. Its walls were of mud—its roof was thatched with old and blackened straw, the

smoke ascended from an aperture in it, and the only beams of day which could by possibility penetrate to its interior were admitted through an opening in the wall, only to be recognized as a window from the few pieces of cracked and broken glass, mingling with the many more obtuse articles, which combined to exclude the air and light alike.

The spot, however, in which this mass of clay and straw was situated, was one of wildly romantic beauty. Clusters of deeply indented rocks and cliffs projected around it on every side, and rose far into that sea, which, notwithstanding the calmness of the day, foamed and bubbled at their base. Beyond these rocks the wide bosom of the deep extended in unbroken tranquillity for many a long and distant mile. On the whole circuit of the shore there was but one small bay which could afford the worn and weary mariner a temporary shelter from the storm. At the head of

this bay, surrounded by clumps of natural wood, and sheltered from the storms that in winter swept with howling fierceness down the valleys, by tall cliffs of broken rocks interspersed with forests of the wild birch and ashen trees, stood the cottage I have mentioned, and, at the entrance of the bay, on the side most accessible to the inhabitants of the cottage, a solitary beacon was erected to guide the unwary mariner or benighted fisherman to its shelter.

I had time to make these observations while advancing up the broken pathway leading to the cottage door. On reaching it I loudly called for admittance, but no one answered to my call. I then shook the frail door, which easily gave way beneath my touch, and I found myself in the only apartment the hovel could boast of. The appearance of this apartment did not bely the promise its exterior had made. It was miserable

in the extreme. The only articles of furniture it contained were a broken table, a solitary wooden bench, and a truckle bed deposited on the floor in one corner of the room. On this bed lay the powerful bulky form of a being apparently somewhat advanced in years. His features were harsh and weather-beaten, and thick matted locks of grizzled hair escaped from beneath a woollen cap which adorned his head. I approached to awake him, but my progress was arrested by the appearance of sundry articles I had not before observed. A bright and glittering sword, the hilt of which was ornamented with precious stones, a brace of valuable pistols, several pieces of dress of rich materials and exquisite workmanship, and a small bag which appeared to be filled with coins, lay half concealed near the head of the miserable bed.

The appearance of these articles was so totally inconsistent with all around, that I

hesitated as to what course I should adopt. My doubts, however, were soon dispelled; for, while I gazed upon them, the eyes of the gruff sleeper opened, and in a voice of thunder he demanded what I wished. Briefly I explained my situation to him, and briefly he replied, making me welcome to such entertainment as his dwelling could afford.

"Sit down—sit down"—he exclaimed, pointing to the wooden bench, "and what the beacon-lighter can give shall be thine."

I liked not the appearance of the man, yet there was a frank hospitality in his manner which might have won the confidence of those less practised in the world's ways than I had been. I liked him not, and therefore, while I accepted his hospitality I distrusted him. From his conversation, I soon discovered that he was the watcher of the beacon I had observed placed at the entrance to the little

bay. I also learned that there was no human habitation within the distance of many miles—that, even in the broad light of day, the way was perilous, and, in many places, almost inaccessible, and that, in short, if I valued the safety of life or limb, I must be contented to abide under shelter of his roof for the night

While the watcher spoke, I observed that he busied himself about his cottage and his bed, and, ever and anon, when he deemed himself unnoticed, strove more completely to conceal the glittering articles I had seen.

"Friend," I exclaimed, as he drew the covering of his bed partially over them, "methinks you have rich adornments for so poor a mansion. May I ask if these are the articles of your usual dress."

"No," he answered, in a gruff voice, as he turned suddenly round and stared me broadly in the face—"No, I collected these

from the wreck of a foreign vessel; there are many such upon this shore, and the sea sometimes affords the earth a share of its spoils."

I appeared satisfied with this explanation, and in a few minutes afterwards joined my host at his repast. It was by no means one of a sparing nature, so far as the best of fish and game could go. But hilarity formed no part of my host's disposition, and it passed in total silence, save when a few short and surly remarks were drawn from him, in answer to the questions I occasionally asked.

There was but little time, accordingly, occupied in our repast, and scarcely was it finished, when the Watcher appeared to lend an attentive ear to sounds, which, if discernible to his, were certainly not audible to my senses. I heard nothing but the whistling of the wind through the crevices of the roof, as it came in slight occasional blasts. Yet, methought, there was something peculiar in

its sound, and, perchance, it might have been this which struck the Watcher's experienced ear—for he arose, and, opening the cabin door, stepped out upon the narrow turf which lay before it. I followed, and found him earnestly watching the appearance of the sky. Thin vapoury clouds were floating swiftly to and fro upon its surface. The evening was drawing to a close, and the rising moon was partially obscured by the dark and heavy masses that lowered on the far horizon.

"We shall have a fearful night," said the Watcher, after having regarded these appearances for a few seconds.

"Woe be to those who are on the deep," I answered, "for that wading moon, and those flying clouds portend a fierce and angry struggle of the elements."

"Friend," exclaimed the Watcher, turning towards me, and closely peering in my face, "you seem to have knowledge of the signs of

an approaching storm.—Have ye witnessed many in your day?"

"I have,"—I answered quietly—"both on land and sea."

"And come unharmed and safe through all?"

"Safe—but not unharmed"—was my answer to his question.

At that moment, a dark cloud obscured the moon, and although I could no longer distinguish the lineaments of the Watcher's countenance, I still beheld the half-defined outline of his bulky person standing, like the spirit of the storm, when it gazes forth upon the coming tempest. A bright dazzling flash of lightning gleamed across the sky, and lightened up the whole surrounding scenery, as if with the broad glare of day. I was intently gazing on the Watcher at the time, and methought I saw a grim smile upon his harsh features, as I heard him mutter to himself—"Yes, yes,

there be many whom the sea spares, but," he added in a lower voice, "who never reach the land."

"True," I answered in an absent mood; for I was looking at the now deeply agitated sea, and other thoughts occupied my mind.

The Watcher started, as if unconcious that any one had been within hearing of his words. He turned round, and with slow and measured steps repassed the threshold of his door. I followed him mechanically, for the night air fell coldly on my brow, and I was not sorry to see him busily employed in stirring up the embers of his fire. These he soon blew up, and heaping new billets of dried wood upon them, a bright and cheerful blaze, in a few minutes, quivered to the roof of his humble dwelling.

We sat in deep silence for the space of many minutes. The rising storm whistled fearfully around the dwelling; now, in fierce and

passing gusts, as if it would have borne even the fast-rooted trees and rocks, upon the wings of the blast, before it, and anon lulling itself into a deceitful calm, like the still crouching tiger ere he springs upon his prey. The lightning glared fearfully, even amidst the bright blazing of our fire, and the thunder, as yet distant, rolled and grumbled like the angry howlings of the monarch of the woods when awakened from his nightly lair.

"It is, indeed, a fearful night," I exclaimed, as a louder and nearer peal shook our frail mansion to its foundations. "When do you light the beacon?"

"Shortly," he answered as he turned away, again to busy himself with some unimportant arrangements about his cottage.

"But," I remonstrated, "may not the tempest-tost mariner even now be straining his eyes to catch a gleam of hope from its inspiring light?"

"And if he should, what is that to me?" he gruffly asked.

"Not much, I imagine," was my reply; "unless the feeling of having aided to preserve a fellow creature's life can give you the best of all returns—the thanks of a contented heart."

"Many a moth," he exclaimed, with a sardonic grin, "has been lured to its own destruction by a light."

I liked not the tone in which he spoke. There was something sinister in his aspect; and, although I felt no fear, a momentary shudder passed across my frame.

It passed—and the Watcher observed it not; but, after a short period, when a peculiarly wild gust had rung above our heads, he exclaimed, as if holding commune with his own soul—"Fearful—fearful, indeed—I must light the beacon now"—and he arose and departed on his errand.

The situation in which I was left, was

scarcely that which would have been the object of my voluntary choice. The storm had increased to a violence that threatened absolute destruction to the Watcher's hut; the eddying smoke drove back from the aperture in the roof, till the whole of it was filled with a pestilential vapour, and the lighter pieces of half-burnt wood were blown about by the passing gale, which, finding entrance at many a nook and cranny, swept along the cottage floor with a cheerless feeling as it past. I hastened to follow the Watcher's steps. But what was my surprise to find the door fastened on the outside. Could this have been done intentionally, or was it merely to secure it against the rushing of the storm? I asked myself this question; but no satisfactory answer was presented to my mind. I called aloud; but that was vain, for, had the Watcher stood within three paces of the spot, the whistling of the tempest would have drowned my voice, and

carried the sounds away upon the wings of the wind long ere they could have reached his ear.

I had no desire, however, to remain in the situation in which I had been placed. I exerted my strength, and endeavoured to remove the fastenings of the door, till the frail tenement shook again. It resisted all my efforts for a time. At last, I perceived it partially open, as if the ligatures by which it was bound had been stretched under my exertions. Still, however, I could not open it sufficiently wide to effect my escape. A thought struck me. The door had been secured by hempen ropes, and these I could now reach. I seized a brand from the fire and applied it to the ropes. They burned—they blazed—they cracked—they gave way—and I was free.

As this had occupied some time, and the Watcher was now out of sight. For a moment's space, ere I hastened to follow his footsteps to the beacon, I gazed upon the fearful scene

before me, and could not help wondering at the strange contrast it afforded to the smiling beauty of the morning. The moon was now totally obscured under thick, heavy masses of dark and lowering clouds that, notwithstanding their density and weight, *shot* along the heavens with the rapidity of the lightest vapours. The wind roared and whistled upon its way, till the mountain pines bent beneath its violence. The billows of the ocean reared their crested heads like a thousand angry serpents, and rose and swelled on high till they seemed to battle with the clouds; then, rushing forward, like a war-horse at its speed, they burst, with the noise of many thunders, upon the rugged precipices of the coast, and left their light and broken spray, white as the driven snow, to be whirled far away upon the blast. Ever and anon, bright flashes of lightning gleamed along the waste, and partially illuminated the whole surround-

ing scene; but the sound of the thunder that followed these flashes was lost amidst the wild roaring of the storm.

"Alas! alas!" I exclaimed, "and is this land, which I deemed so bright, subject to tempests such as these?"

While I uttered this reflection, I beheld, in the far distance, a bright and vivid flash—then another, and another; and the sound of three guns, borne upon the wind, came slowly booming over the deep. It was evident that some vessel in distress was nigh, and I hastened to the beach to lend my feeble aid; but, ere I reached the shore, I beheld a long flickering stream of light tremble, as it were, for one moment, in the air, and then rise in a bright and steady blaze to heaven. It was the beacon; and, guided by its light, I hurried onward to the beach. In a few minutes I stood beside the Watcher, although he saw me not, nor seemed to be aware of the presence

of a human being. The rocks around were fearfully broken, rugged and pointed; stretching far into the sea, in many an endless reef, while the vexed waves, and the white foam, and the dashing spray, rose like living mountains over their cold and frowning height. In the midst of this fearful scene, what was my horror to perceive that the Watcher had moved the beacon, from the entrance of the little bay to the most dangerous and rugged spot upon the whole coast.

"Wretch," I exclaimed, as I seized him by the arm, what means this deceitful conduct?"

For a moment he seemed startled by the suddenness of the assault, but instantly resuming his habitual coolness, he quickly replied—"To warn yon labouring bark from this dangerous shore."

"To warn!" I exclaimed in anger—"rather to guide it to destruction. But, quick, quick"—I added, as the bark visibly approached the

shore—"restore the beacon to its place, or, by the soul of the Prophet, I smite thee on the spot."

The Watcher laughed aloud in scorn. I seized him with a powerful grasp—I struggled to gain possession of the light—but he was of a strong and hardy frame, and infinitely more accustomed to the precarious footing on which we stood, than I had been. Yet was our struggle long and desperate. Like two angry demons, we contended amidst the howling of the storm. The fire flashed from beneath our feet, as we dashed them on the hard and flinty rocks. But I felt my strength fast yielding, and my only consolation was in the thick breathing of the Watcher, which told that his also was well-nigh spent. By one well-directed effort, therefore, I determined to end the conflict by his fall or by my own, and, collecting my whole remaining strength, I bounded upon him with the fury of a roused

tiger. Back—back he fell—down he rolled; but in his fall he struck against the beacon; it, too, fell, and in an instant all around was involved in utter darkness.

There seemed a pause of stillness in the storm, to add to the horror of that darkness. In the midst of it, the loud laugh of the Watcher broke upon my ear, and it sounded like the rejoicings of the prince of hell over the spirits of the damned.

"Thanks—thanks," he cried, "thou hast done what I was about to do—doffed the light—and all is now well."

"Wretch!" I shouted in impotent anger, as by the reflection of the thick flashing lightning I beheld the unhappy bark within a hundred yards of the accursed shore. Its deck was covered with living beings, who stretched forth their hands, imploring that aid which no power of man could then bestow. I shouted—I

waved to them to turn from the fatal coast. My voice was lost amidst the noise of the tempest, and my signals were of no use. It was too late. On—on—the devoted bark hurried to its fate. It struck upon the outward reef of rocks—the breakers dashed like a thousand furies against its helpless sides, its whole frame-work parted with a fearful crash, and, in a few seconds more, the ocean was strewed with fragments of the wreck.

Now was the Watcher's—now was the *Wrecker's* time. He arose from the jutting fragment of the rock, from which he had calmly watched the destruction of so many fellow-creatures, lured by himself to death. He dashed down to the water's edge, and with a busy hand proceeded to collect such articles of plunder, as the waves conveyed within his reach. Many, and of much value, were the articles thus secured, and I was no longer

surprised when I recalled to mind the rich vestments and jewelled ornaments I had seen beneath his humble roof.

The lightning flashed almost without intermission, spreading a light like that of dazzling day; and although the Wrecker, busied in his search, was now at some distance from me, I could perceive his every movement. I saw the body of a human being washed within his reach. Apparently it was clad in a rich garb, for, like a beast of prey, the wrecker darted towards it. I could not deem that his intention was to save, but as little did I then imagine that it was to *kill*. Few, however, were the moments of suspense. With both hands he seized a huge fragment of the rock. He raised it on high above his head. I have a fearful recollection of that moment—I screamed aloud and darted from the spot on which I stood, but my foot stumbled on the rocks, and I fell stunned and prostrate, to the ground.

When I arose, the moon, which had hitherto been obscured, shone brightly from behind a cloud, and in its pale light I beheld a crashed and mangled head, and the Wrecker rifling the body of all the valuables it had once, when a living being, possessed.

I groaned when I saw that I was too late to render my intended aid; but the spirit of vengeance was aroused within me, and I hurried onward with the full intention of sacrificing the remorseless miscreant to the manes of the being he had murdered. A few winding rocks hid him for several minutes from my view. With the rapidity of lightning I rounded these, and came suddenly upon the wretch. Merciful God! one instant more, and again my aid would have been of no avail. Two helpless beings lay senseless at his feet. His bare right arm was already on high, to dash the huge fragment of the rock it sustained upon their heads. There was not a

moment to be lost—I sprung forward—I seized his arm—the rock rolled backwards from his grasp, he was thrown off his balance, and, by one vigorous and well directed blow, I smote him to the earth.

He lay senseless at my feet, while, with a grim smile, I beheld his harsh features assume a deadly paleness in the cold and wan light of the moon. I could not, however, smite a fallen foe. The first ebullition of passion had vanished—I seized upon a strong rope which the waves had washed ashore, and, binding him hand and foot, I left him to his fate.

Then I turned to those to whose aid, if human aid could avail aught, I had so opportunely arrived. They were, a man somewhat advanced in life, and a youthful female, on whose pale features the light of beauty still seemed to linger. They were clasped in each other's arms, and when I bent over them, and pressed my hand upon their hearts, methought

I perceived a gentle motion still playing around the seat of life. It might have been fancy, for their eyes were closed, and no sound escaped from their parted lips; but in idle conjectures no time was to be lost. With a strong arm I raised them from the ground. I cast them on my shoulders, and half tottering beneath the weight of my double burden, hurried, as rapidly as I could, to the Wrecker's cottage.

I bore these two lifeless beings beneath the shelter of its roof, and laid them on the miscreant's bed. I then stirred the almost dying embers to a bright and cheerful blaze. I heaped on many billets of dried wood, and, stripping the unfortunates of their wet and dripping garments, rubbed them for many minutes with a warm and dry woollen cloth, till I observed symptoms of returning life in both. I then clothed them with garments, which, I doubt not, had, at one period, belonged to

persons in a situation similar to what theirs had so recently been, and, by dint of unceasing care, soon restored both to a consciousness of their present state. Reader,—in these shipwrecked strangers I recognized the hospitable peasant of the mountains, and his only, amiable child, who had so effectually aided me after my escape from the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I could not conceal my surprise; nor was theirs less than mine; but, like a skilful physician, I forbade all questioning for the present. I gave each a small quantity of such food as lay within my reach, and recommended them to seek a short repose. With this injunction the sweet young girl before me, worn out as she was with terror and fatigue, soon complied, and I had the satisfaction of observing her almost immediately sink into a calm and peaceful slumber. It was not so, however, with her good and worthy parent.

He motioned me to his side, and when I had seated myself by his pillow, after a few minutes engaged apparently in mental prayer, he addressed me in the following melancholy terms.

"My friend, the hand of death is upon me; I feel its cold and leaden pressure, and I know that I am not long for this world. There is an hour when man cannot be deceived. The mists of life clear away like film from his eyes, and, when life itself is about to follow, he beholds with somewhat of that clearness of vision which his disembodied spirit is so soon destined to enjoy in its full extent. To me this hour has at last arrived; but ere my worn and weary spirit quits its frail tenement of clay, I would fain confide a dear and precious deposit to your protecting care."

Thus far had he proceeded, when I ventured to interrupt him, and tried to re-assure his drooping spirits, by holding out the pros-

pect of recovery and the enjoyment of many brighter days. But he, in turn, interrupted me.

"No—no—my friend. I see, and am grateful for, your kind endeavours, but now I cannot be deceived. Believe me, I have a thankful heart to the Giver of all good, for having, at this hour, thrown me upon the care of one I have before known. Oh! had my poor child been left unprotected on this desert shore, or thrown amongst mere strangers, who could not have prized her gentle and amiable temper, this parting hour would have been a bitter one indeed. But stay, the sands of life are swiftly ebbing, and ere the last grain shall have fallen in the glass, I would fain disclose some particulars of my poor child's unhappy fate to one who may, henceforth, be her protector through the rough and stormy path of life."

I spoke no more, for the earnestness of the old man's manner had fixed my attention, and

I listened to the words which fell slowly from his lips. His tale was soon told.

"Many years," he said, "ere we beheld you, a weary traveller, in the midst of the mountains, I had been a wealthy and somewhat prosperous farmer on the plains. I was respected by the rich—esteemed by my neighbours, and the poor seldom departed, unrelieved, from my door. One only daughter, the image of her long departed but not forgotten mother, blessed my dwelling. Oh! had you seen her in the lightness and beauty of her youth, you never—never—could have forgotten her again. Her buoyant step—her sparkling, laughing eyes, her open brow and cheerful countenance, brought mirth and sunshine with them wherever she appeared. She was beloved by all, for her temper was as sweet as her looks were beautiful. But upon these I cannot now dwell. I must turn to a sadder page of her tale.—In the immediate

vicinity of my dwelling, many of the wealthy and the gay had their abode. Even by them was my Eva courted and caressed, and often called to join their merry-makings and their fêtes. Woe is me! in the vanity of my heart I saw not the danger that attended her being thus moved out of her own sphere. I but saw her meet with what I fancied to be her due, and when, with laughing looks and sparkling eyes, she would return from their gay doings, and recount their harmless follies to her fond father, I smiled upon my child, and kissed her forehead, and blessed my darling, and with foolish fondness said she was born to grace a higher rank.

"For some time these doings went on in their usual way, and no change in the looks or conduct of my child betokened that they had made any undue impression upon her mind. At length, however, a change did come. Her step became less buoyant—her eye less bright;

she shunned her father's presence, and more than once I beheld those features on which I had never seen any thing but smiles, dimmed, and drowned in tears. Still I guessed not—dreamt not of the cause; for how could I deem that aught of evil could live within a breast I had known to be so gentle and so pure? To all my entreaties she turned a deaf ear. When I spoke, she would press my hand to her lips, and weep bitter—bitter tears over it. Then I would clasp her to my heart, and kiss her pale cheek again and again, till, bursting from my embrace, she would fly to her own apartment, from which, for hours together, I have heard her bitter, heart-rending sobs issue, when she thought no one was near to listen to these expressions of her grief."

"But why do I dwell on hours such as these. The truth was too—too soon disclosed. Amidst the gay and brilliant ones, to whose society my child had been so unhappily intro-

duced, there was one of high birth and haughty bearing, whose attentions, perhaps affections, she unfortunately attracted and engrossed."

"Often, often did he visit our comparatively humble dwelling; and, although I deemed him gay and thoughtless, I never fancied that an evil heart could dwell in so fair a form. My years should have taught me more knowledge of the world; but, surely, the influence of a spell had bound my senses.

"By a long series of the most deep artifices—the most constant attentions—the most consummate address, this proud youth gained the first fond affections of my daughter's heart. What need I say more? Bear with me, my friend—bear with me, I am a father. He triumphed—she fell—and the villain, the heartless villain, deserted and left her to her shame. She did not, however, long survive, I cannot say to bear reproach, for no one who

knew my gentle Eva would have heaped reproach upon her; I cannot say to be a mark for the finger of scorn to point at, for those who had known her in her better day, might have pitied, but never could have scorned, my child. No! she died in giving birth to this slumbering innocent, and her last act was to confide her to my care. 'My father,' she faintly whispered, as she raised her dark eyes to heaven, 'she is the offspring of guilt—but let not the poor innocent suffer for its parent's crimes.' She pressed it to her bosom, but she knew not a mother's joy. She kissed its little cheek again and again; she placed it within my arms, and she smiled when she saw it there. I kissed its cheek, even as she had done, and a glad look brightened up my daughter's eyes, and I knew that her spirit felt the forgiveness of a father. I bent down to replace the little charge within her arms, but her soul had quitted its frail tenement of clay.

and was already in its Maker's presence. All that remained of her, lay before me, like the beautiful casket in which the spirit of an angel had been enshrined. I kissed her cold cheek, but I shed no tear, for I had lost all my heart had clung to in this world, and my grief was far too bitter to shew itself in outward signs of woe. Her remains were interred in the village church-yard, and a plain, white, marble slab records her name and age. Should fate have led the footsteps of her destroyer there, he may have seen it; and, for his sake, I trust he dropt, at least, one tear over the ruin he had made.

"From that hour I became careless of the world and its goods. Nothing prospered which I undertook. The bright smiles which had cheered my home, and sweetened labour, were gone. I became disheartened—disgusted with the world, and every thing around me. I sold off the slender remains of my stock—disposed

of the more immoveable part of my goods, and with my daughter's child I retired to the mountains, where you beheld us living, in more of peace and quiet than I had known for many years. This sleeping innocent grew up the image of her mother, both in mind and looks, and often at the calm hour of sunset, when I have gazed upon her glowing cheek, I have fancied that my own child had returned to this world, to bless my declining years."

"But," I enquired, "did the wretched seducer make no enquiries about his child?"

"I heard not of him for many years"—replied the old man. "He was rich and powerful; I was poor and without friends. At last, a young Cavalier, prompted, I believe, more by the kindness of his own heart than the wishes of the seducer, sought and found me out. He had become his confidant, in consequence of an accidental circumstance,

and ceased not to represent the enormity of his guilt to him, till he obtained permission to make the wished for search. He found me out, as I have said, but his well meant efforts proved unsuccessful. This note, the last communication I ever had upon the subject—gave the death-blow to my hopes." The old man untied a string that hung around his neck, and from many an envelope removed the well secured paper. He placed it in my hands, and then, although much exhausted, proceeded with his tale. " Years rolled on—and I heard nothing farther of the seducer or his friend, till, shortly after the period when you had departed from our humble dwelling, I learned, by pure accident, that he had left his country on a foreign mission, and that this land was the object of his destination. I had little wish to part with the child of my affections, but I was fast descending the hill of life, and casting selfishness aside, I deter-

mined to risk my all of worldly wealth, to secure, if possible, a father's care for my daughter's child. I was anxious, too, that she should move in that rank to which I deemed she was of right entitled. I, therefore, disposed of every moveable article I had. I converted all into money, and securing our passage, in a vessel about to sail from the nearest port, we left our peaceful mansion, and were soon involved in the dangers of the deep. For many days we had a prosperous and successful voyage, till the wild storm of yesterday arose, and drove us far, far from our destined course. I need say no more—on this shore we were wrecked;—and here my vain pursuit must terminate, for from this bed I shall never rise again."

I sought to utter the words of comfort in the ears of the dying man. He pressed my hand and thanked me with a look, but, faintly shaking his head, gave me to understand that

hope with him was now but an empty shadow. Faint and exhausted, he lay for many minutes apparently asleep. At length, arousing his dormant energies, he grasped my hand, and besought my protection for the slumbering innocent beside him. It will readily be believed that I gave my faithful promise to this effect; for, in truth, the prospect of having one to tread a few steps of the gloomy path of life with me, was as sunshine to my soul. The eyes of the dying man brightened with a look of joy. Fondly, affectionately he pressed my hand.

"It but remains," he faintly said, "to afford you the clue by which the heartless seducer may be found. He is—but stay"—he turned around, that he might the more easily and earnestly address me. As he turned, his last expiring look fell upon the jewel-hilted sword that still lay beside his bed. He gazed upon it, till his eyes almost started from their sock-

ets—he darted forth his emaciated hand and arm—he seized it—he held it close to his eyes, and peered upon it with a keen, but wandering, look; for the hand of death, and, I deemed, of brooding insanity, was now upon him. "Ha—ha—ha"—he shouted, with a maniac's laugh—"'tis his—'tis his—I know it well—'tis his. The Avenger's hand has wrecked him upon this fatal coast, and my disembodied spirit shall yet meet his tortured soul, howling amidst the darkness of the storm. Ha—ha—ha—I see it shrink and cower beneath my stern upbraidings. On—on—let me gird my loins and prepare me for the fight! Away—away—ye cannot hold me—'tis my child that calls." The jewelled weapon dropt from his powerless grasp—he fell backwards on his bed, and, with one long-drawn sigh, expired.

I bent over the features of the dead, and closed his eyes—I stretched out and composed his limbs, for these offices were familiar

to me, and I even felt as if I had somewhat of a more intimate connection with the dead than with the living. I then turned to the slumbering innocent, whose gentle breathings were so slight as no longer to fall upon my ear—I wondered that the ravings of her more than parent had not disturbed her rest. But, when I looked upon her, my wonder ceased —she had sunk into that repose which no earthly sound could again disturb—her cares were over, and her pure spirit had escaped from its prison-house without a struggle or a sigh.

For many minutes I gazed listlessly upon the faces of the pale sleepers.—Another dream had vanished from my mind; and when I looked upon the dead, I wished that I too could have slumbered by their side. Such are the sudden changes which the short period of a day can produce. In the morning my heart had been full of hope, but the

events of the day had dissipated its brightening dream, and in the evening it was overcome with sadness. There was, however, a necessity for exertion. I could no longer remain in the Wrecker's hut—I roused myself from the reverie into which I had fallen—I seized upon the jewelled sword which still lay gleaming in brightness above the bodies of the dead. I raised a huge brand from the fire, and applied it to the thatched roof, the dried rafters, and wooden furniture of the hut.—In a moment all was in a blaze; and as I rushed forth from the cottage door, and left it, with all its hidden riches, to be consumed within its wretched master's sight, I rejoiced in the glorious funeral pile I had given to the two who lay beneath its roof

CHAPTER V.

> "Is this a dream?—Oh! no, it cannot be—
> Again—again, that angel form I see,
> In its own purity, all spotless, bright
> As some glad thing of uncreated light."
>
> Anon.

The grey morning had begun to dawn when I left the cottage of the Wrecker, and ere the sun had reached his height every trace of the storm of the preceding evening had disappeared, and I was many miles upon my way.

My journey now lay in a more inland direction than I had hitherto pursued. About noon I passed the mountain's gorge, and losing sight of the blue deep, proceeded through a romantic valley, bounded on either side by

high and apparently inaccessible mountains, whose rugged peaks mingled with the clouds that rested on their tops. Worn out and fatigued by the exertions of the preceding day, I now sought a few hours' repose; and, as I lay down beneath the shelter of a clump of dwarf oaks and silver birches, I bethought myself, for the first time, of the billet the old man had confided to my care.

It was with a species of listless curiosity I drew the document from its envelope; but the moment I cast my eye upon it my attention was aroused in the most keen and painful manner.—It was signed by the initials E. D., and contained but these few words—"It cannot be—my efforts have been fruitless—all hope is over—he will never see you more." It required not the aid of the initials to tell me that this note was in the hand writing of Edward Dinwiddie. A painful suspicion crossed my mind:—Could he, the

friend of my heart, be the seducer of innocence? The thought, however, was but of a momentary nature, for I remembered that the old man had said the note was written by one to whose kind, but fruitless, exertions, to bring the seducer to a sense of his guilt, he was indebted. "But might not this have been a blind?" I asked myself, as the idea of the little likelihood of any one volunteering in such a service, on another's account, arose to view.—I had, however, too often found appearances deceitful, to trust implicitly to them now; and when I remembered the frank, open, confiding nature of the brother of my Ellen, I dismissed the thought indignantly from my mind, as totally unworthy of my regard.

"No—no," I muttered to myself, "it cannot be,"—and, after a refreshing sleep of two or three hours, I arose and resumed my journey, with renewed confidence in my friend.

As I proceeded on my way, the country around gradually assumed a more civilized appearance. Here and there a few cottages were scattered thinly on the mountain's side; and amidst the wide extended sea of purple heath around, a small cultivated spot, already assuming the whitened hue of harvest, occasionally appeared. The trees, too, no longer bore the bleak and stunted look of those in the more immediate neighbourhood of the sea. They were stately in their height, and their spreading foliage, rich in the varied tints of autumn, gleamed beautifully in the evening sun.

It was nigh the close of day when I reached the borders of a small mountain lake or tarn. —On the side on which I stood, the ground approached its margin with a gentle slope, but on the opposite side, a wild, precipitous rock arose, almost perpendicularly, from the water to the height of many feet. Its summit

was crowned with cedar trees, that, in the fading light of the evening, and tinged as they were with the burnished gold of a setting sun, appeared as the feathered plumes upon a warrior's helmet, nodding to and fro in the light and scarcely stirring wind. At no great distance, but somewhat lower than the spot from which I gazed, and surrounded by beautiful shrubberies, and in the immediate vicinity of a romantic glen, I beheld a retired dwelling, the very appearance of which, methought, told that peace and comfort reigned within. Behind it, the tall spire of the village church arose, gracefully, from amidst the surrounding trees, while still further to the west a long ridge of hills appeared, rising to the blue sky above, as if to shut out that lovely dwelling from the corroding cares of busy life.

I gazed upon the sun, setting behind that long ridge of hills in a splendour so beautiful

and bright, that, for the moment, I almost conceived the gates of heaven were opening to my view. My wandering thoughts, however, were speedily recalled to earth by the sensation of an approaching faintness stealing over me.—I had not tasted food since the preceding evening, and the giddiness arising from inanition, added to that occasioned by my long and steady gaze at the bright luminary before me, was more than I could bear.—My head swam round; the hills, the trees, the lake, all appeared to be in motion, as if suddenly endued with life. The earth reeled beneath my feet; it seemed to me as if I stood in air. I made a vain effort to support myself, but fell senseless to the ground.

I could not have remained in this situation for any length of time. When I opened my eyes, I beheld many a well-known face hanging over me with anxiety depicted upon every feature. There was Edward—Ellen—Mary

Dinwiddie; and, at a short distance, as if engaged in silent prayer, their excellent father stood.—I could not credit the evidence of my senses, and quickly closed my eyes, as if to shut out the presence of a mocking dream. But a well-known voice fell upon my ear,—a well-known touch, with its gentle pressure, thrilled to my heart. I again opened my eyes, and gazed around me; there was no mockery in the scene, for, in very truth, I was again surrounded by my well-beloved friends.

I will not attempt to depict the joy occasioned by this unlooked-for meeting. The congratulations poured upon me were numerous and loud; in the midst of them, I listened in vain for the calm and gentle voice of Ellen. It fell not upon my ear, but the thrilling pressure of her hand, and the subdued look of happiness that shone in her soft eyes, told that the tide of joy in her heart, though flow-

ing in its own silent course, was to the full as deep as in the hearts of those where it rushed along in a more rapid and noisy stream.

Question after question, in quick succession, poured upon me, till the good old Mr. Dinwiddie interposed, and suggested the propriety of all explanations being deferred till my exhausted health and strength were in some degree restored.—Under the guidance of my kind nurses, and the prescription of the modern Esculapius from the neighbouring village, this was soon effected. With one of these, it is true, I could well have dispensed; for I liked not the fawning, cringing manners of the slave,—but, in compliance with the wishes of my ever kind and considerate friends, I submitted, for a time, to the irksome necessity of his attendance.

With returning health explanations on both sides ensued, and our mutual adventures afforded the subject of conversation during the

stillness of many an autumnal evening, when our cheerful circle had closed round the enticing beauty of a blazing fire. Often did I observe the tears start into Ellen's eyes, and roll down her cheeks, while a trembling thrill of horror pervaded the whole frame, and a half-suppressed cry escaped from her lips, at the narration of the sufferings I had endured. Yet it was not these which awoke in the minds of my hearers the deepest feelings of sympathy and compassion. When I spoke of the disinterested kindness of the old man and his amiable child, a glow of gratitude suffused their cheeks; but it speedily gave way to the paleness of sorrow when I narrated the melancholy catastrophe of their simple tale.—For Edward's private ear I reserved the particulars of that catastrophe. But the look of conscious innocence remained undisturbed upon his brow; and even when I held his own note before his eyes, a momentary expression

of surprise alone sat upon his features. He made me repeat every particular of the old man's tale, and while I did so, his attention was immoveably and intensely fixed.—At its close, he merely muttered to himself—"Strange—mysterious—yet I thought I recognized it"—and requested me to shew him the weapon, the sight of which had so strangely agitated the dying man. With minute and scrupulous anxiety he examined it.—"It is even so!" he at length exclaimed, while a deep and heavy sigh escaped him—"It is even so—and the wretched man has at length expiated his crimes."

"You remember," he continued, turning to me, while he gave the sword into my hand, "you remember the proud and haughty Aldobrand. He was our senior by many years, yet we saw much of him at Rome. He it was, who, in the indulgence of his own licentious passions, wrought this desolation in the

bosom of a happy home. By accident I became acquainted with the tale, and, using the influence which our relative situations at the moment happened to bestow on me, urged him, but, as you have seen, in vain, to repair the mischief he had done. The note you have shewn me was not written till my efforts had proved unsuccessful. I then quitted Aldobrand with anger, and, till he was sent upon a secret mission from his own government to ours, I never heard of him more. The vessel in which he embarked was supposed to have foundered at sea. At all events, it was never seen after its departure from its own land. Now, however, its fate is certain, and the hand of unerring vengeance has at length overtaken the wretched man, as, sooner or later, it will all those who tread in the same paths of iniquity and crime. But the subject is a painful one, my friend—let it, therefore, be consigned to the oblivion of the tomb,

where all those who were actors in the unhappy tale now repose."

I was not sorry to comply with this request, for I had regained my friend, and the slight shadow of suspicion which had rested on my mind, was dispelled for ever by the open sunshine of his truth and candour.

It was with an undisturbed attention, therefore, that I listened to the few events which had befallen my friends after my sudden disappearance from their society.—But these, one, whom I have not ceased to lament, must, in his own language, now detail.

"We had little suspicion," he begun, "on the night on which we last beheld you, that you had even quitted our abode. We deemed that you had gone to your apartment for the night, as you had formerly been occasionally in the habit of doing; and, in a short time thereafter, we all separated, and retired to repose. Next day, however, when the usual

hour of our morning repast had long gone by, and you did not appear, we feared that illness might have been the cause of your early departure on the preceding evening. I, accordingly, sought your room. I knocked gently at the door; no answer was returned. I then knocked louder, but hearing no reply, I laid my hand upon the lock, which at once yielded to the pressure.—I entered your apartment, but it was obvious that it had not been inna bited during the preceding night. We then learned, for the first time, that you had been seen passing through the shrubbery, and oilowing the path which led to the grotto and fountain of Egeria. This, however, afforded no clue whereby you might be traced, or the cause of your absence discovered, and we all remained in a state of anxiety which you may conceive, but which I certainly cannot describe.

"In the midst of our conjectures, and many

of them were of the wildest nature, Di Portici entered the apartment. We told him what had occurred—our doubts—our fears; and, to do him justice, he proved of infinitely more service than any of us.—He immediately set on foot the most active inquiries. Emissaries were employed in every quarter; but day after day passed, and still no intelligence whatever could be obtained. At length, I happened, accidentally, to mention, in Di Portici's presence, the rash words you had spoken at La Scala Santa and elsewhere. Slight as the circumstance was, it afforded his ingenuity a cue.—'My life upon it,' he exclaimed, 'he has fallen into the power of the Inquisition.' We all started with instinctive dread. How blind—how foolish we were, not to have dreamt of this before. But there was no time to lose in idle and unprofitable surmises.—Following up the hint he had received, or rather his own fortunate suggestion, Di Portici once more

set his myrmidons to work, and we soon obtained such information as left us little doubt of the reality of your fate.

"Still, however, our information was not so correct as to enable us to act in any definitive manner upon it, nor, indeed, to depend upon it as altogether true. But the little doubt that remained upon our minds was soon dispelled by the arrival of a party of the officers of the Holy Tribunal, late one evening, for the purpose of searching for and seizing all important papers in your possession. This mode of procedure, undoubtedly, surprised us all; and, for a time, we strove to defend the rights of a free-born people, by representing that we were foreigners, and not under the miserable bondage of their laws. This availed us not; we were laughed at for our pains, and threatened with the vengeance of the Holy Office. For such a threat I cared little; but the very name of the Inquisition struck a chill of terror

upon my sisters' hearts, and, knowing that my resistance could avail nothing, I was reluctantly compelled to withdraw my opposition, and allow your papers to be sealed up and carried from the house.

"Immediately I informed Di Portici of what had occurred; and, without loss of time, he moved heaven and earth, and what, perchance, was of more consequence, the interest of his wealthy and powerful relations, in your behalf. All was unavailing. We were told the crime of which you had been accused was of too deep a die to admit of any such interference. This, however, we heeded not; for we knew that the jaundiced sight of the Holy Tribunal often magnified a very venial offence into a fearful crime.

"Matters of another, and even of a more pressing, or, at least, personal nature, soon occupied our attention, and engrossed our thoughts. We were informed, from a source,

the authenticity of which we could not doubt, that we had all, and especially our gentle Ellen, become objects of suspicion to the Inquisition, as denounced heretics, and for some time past our every motion had been watched. This intelligence was soon confirmed by Di Portici, who rushed upon us early one morning, and, in a rapid and confused manner, besought us not to delay one instant in leaving Rome, as he could not, even for an hour, answer for our safety. His request was backed by arguments so conclusive as to leave no doubt upon our minds with regard to the course we should pursue, and, before noon of the same day, we had fairly bid adieu to the Eternal City. It was lucky that our measures were adopted with so much decision; for, as I have since learned, within eight-and-forty hours after our departure, a party of the officers of the Tribunal arrived for the express purpose of conveying us to

the dungeons of the Inquisition;—out of which heaven only knows when we might have escaped. Even at this distance of time, my blood runs cold at the bare idea.

"We had made good use, however, of the short time we had gained, and ere the most Holy Tribunal was aware of our departure, we were well nigh without the reach of its arms. We had allowed nothing to interfere with our setting out; for Di Portici kindly undertook to superintend the execution of those arrangements we were compelled to leave behind; and more especially, at the united request of all of us, to leave no stone unturned, no engine unemployed, to obtain your speedy liberation, and at every opportunity to inform us of the prospect of success in his arduous undertaking.

"Well and kindly did he redeem his word. We often heard from him; but, while every letter told us of your fate, no hope was held

out—not even a distant prospect—that you would ever be released from the dungeons in which you were immured. Month after month rolled on in this state of utter uncertainty and despair, till at length intelligence arrived of a well-formed scheme Di Portici had planned for your escape. It was, I remember, to have been carried into execution at the celebration of an Act of Faith which was at hand. Di Portici had interest sufficient to obtain permission to act as godfather, upon the occasion, to any prisoner he chose.—He fixed upon you, and his plans were so well arranged, with a numerous and desperate band he had munificently rewarded for the purpose, that, immediately before entering the square where the *auto da fè* was to be celebrated, a riot was to have taken place, in the course of which you were to have been at once borne away to a carriage at no great distance, and by the numerous relays which had been pro-

vided, you could not have failed, ere long, to have been far beyond the reach of pursuit. The intelligence thus received, raised us from the depths of despair, and the voice of mirth resounded where, for long, nothing but the sounds of sorrow had been heard. In the extravagance of our joy, while we read Di Portici's letter, we deemed that even then you were at liberty, and we looked forward with animated confidence and hope to our speedily being re-united here.—Alas! our next dispatches were of a different tenor.—They announced the total failure of the kind and amiable Di Portici's plan. How much your own headstrong passions had to do with that failure, I need not tell you; but the bitterness of the disappointment was not on that account lessened to your friends.—On Ellen it fell most severely. A slow wasting disease seemed to have laid its hand upon her; and for long her recovery was doubtful. At length,

the aid of a naturally strong and well-regulated mind enabled her to overcome the deep and withering grief which pressed upon her heart, and ultimately to leave a bed of sickness.—But she only rose to clothe herself in the dress of sorrow, and to wander, like a spectre, around the grave of buried hopes.

"Di Portici's letter had also informed us of your sentence of imprisonment for life; and, from the day it was received, no further intelligence of your fate could be gained.

"Month after month rolled away, and the first bitter pangs of disappointment had subsided into feelings of a more calm and subdued nature. Ellen often wandered, sometimes alone, sometimes with her sister, amidst the surrounding valleys, and over the neighbouring hills. At other times, she went on errands of mercy to the village. On these she was almost constantly accompanied by Mary, for she cared not to meet the gaze of

man alone. It was on their return from one of these last excursions that they beheld a man stretched, apparently in death, upon the green sward on the margin of the lake.—Speedily they procured aid, and had him carried here.—Little did they know, at the time, on whom their aid was bestowed, or how soon the reward of their charitable action was to follow.—But," he added, in a lighter tone, "you are now amongst us, and the remainder of this eventful story is as well known to you as it is to me."

I thanked my friends kindly for their exertions used in my behalf, and, with heartfelt gratitude, acknowledged the obligations I was under to Di Portici. One part of Edward's narrative explained much that had appeared to me inexplicable in the conduct of the Inquisition. My papers had been seized; and now I was at no loss to account for the careful comparison of my answers with sundry

written documents at my last examination, nor for the liberty which immediately followed. My only surprise was, that measures had not been taken to restore these documents to their owner; but, thanks to the character in which the most important of them was traced, there exists no danger of their mysterious contents ever being known; and, thanks to the inviolable secrecy observed with regard to all the transactions of the Inquisition, the import of such as have been decyphered will never travel beyond its walls.

I could now look back from the calm retreat in which I lived, and smile at the dangers I had past. I was in a blessed land of freedom, where the Briarean arms of the Holy Tribunal could not reach—where every man might worship his God in his own way—and where the sentiments of the mind might boldly be expressed without the danger of perpetual

imprisonment being incurred. Alas! how very soon, in the progress of what has been called civilization, did these privileges, for a time, disappear from this fair land, and a reign of bloodshed and terror ensue. It is true, the damnable Inquisition appeared not there by name; but brother rose against brother, father armed against son, friend against friend; the ties of kindred and relationship were snapped asunder, and a systematic torture against misnamed recusants in religious matters was introduced, as barbarous and fierce as ever reigned within the walls of the most *merciful* tribunal. But these are matters for the historian's pen; mine must confine itself to the detail of events occupying an infinitely more limited sphere of action.

Even, however, in *that* limited sphere—even in the calm retreat in which I now dwelt, the more turbulent and fiery passions of the

human mind, acting upon the same principle, although upon a lesser scale, with those which have desolated nations, and set kingdoms in a blaze,* could come to disturb its quiet, and destroy the beauty of its repose.

CHAPTER VI.

"You say right, Sir, we will be merry; we fled from our troubles for no other reason."

INTRODUCTION TO DECAMERON OF BOCCACIO.

I NEED not say that, my health being re-established, an early day was fixed for the celebration of my long pending union with Ellen. A few years had wrought a great change upon her good old father; he was now fast descending into the vale of years, and entertained a natural anxiety to see his beloved child assume the sober duties of a matron, ere time with him should be no more. But there are many of those streams, which cross the plain of life, to be overstept before we

reach the calm and distant mountains that appear to form so sweet a boundary of repose.

Within a few short miles of Mr. Dinwiddie's residence, the proud castle of the chieftain of the surrounding district reared its turrets.—I name him not, because his lineal descendants still occupy the dwelling, and I would not that those of the present day should know with whom their ancestors associated. He possessed no attribute in common with the haughty race of which he was a peer. In his temper, he was mild; in his disposition, benevolent; in his manners, gentle; and yet eminently possessed of that animal courage which has ever been a distinguishing feature of his hardy race. In him, however, courage had not descended to ferocity; and, while in the hour of danger it stood as unshaken and firm as in the breasts of those where it existed, as in the brute creation, by instinct alone, it was tempered

by moral qualities that induced the exercise of mercy, whenever that blessed attribute could be thrown into the scale.

His eldest son, at present the only companion of his solitary hours, was, in every respect, the reverse of his father;—proud, haughty, passionate, overbearing, and, withal, endowed with that species of bull-dog courage which rather sought than avoided danger. To his equals, distant and constrained; to his inferiors, insolent and capricious—he was universally disliked, save by the mean and cringing few who ministered to his inordinate desires, and sought to gratify his unhallowed passions; and even by these he was more feared than loved. Such was the character of him who was almost a daily visitor at the comparatively humble mansion of the Dinwiddies. Upon them, it is true, he looked as he would have done upon animals in an inferior state of existence; and, assuredly, but

for one cause, would have considered them as infinitely beneath his notice. That cause was admiration of the gentle Ellen:—let me not, however, be mistaken; it was not *love*—for no such feeling could have existed within *his* breast. His attentions, however, were of that nature, which, while they awoke suspicion, and were looked upon with distrust by all, could not openly be taken notice of, or reprobated. Within my breast they kindled no feelings but those of hatred and contempt; and both, I believe, were amply returned by one who was not accustomed to have such feelings towards him openly expressed. It will readily be believed that, for this, I cared little; and, when I regarded the immeasurable distance that a hapless fate had placed betwixt the haughty chieftain and myself, that I felt no disposition to render him that deference he so rigidly exacted from those he was

in the habit of looking upon as his inferiors in the scale of life.

Ellen, on the other hand, rejected his attentions in that quiet and gentle, yet decided, manner, which sits like a well-fitting dress upon the virtuous and the good. An icy barrier was thus presented to his view, which all the warmth of unhallowed passion never could dissolve—and often, in my inmost heart, I rejoiced to see those angry passions, to which continued disappointments ever anon gave rise, lower upon the swarthy brow, and gleam from the fiery eyes of the haughty chieftain. Even *he*, in that presence, dared not to give such passions vent, although when he deemed himself unobserved, I have heard his muttered threats rise upon the air like the angry growlings of a distant storm.

But this state of self-satisfied security could not long continue. The perseverance of his

pursuit alarmed me for Ellen's safety, and I therefore now seldom allowed her to wander forth alone.—I feared the wolf that I knew was prowling round my fold, and trembled for the safety of my lamb, although, like a good shepherd, I entertained no apprehensions for my own. In this, perchance, I reckoned without my host, for I observed that the haughty youth began to look upon me with the eyes of one who deemed that his paramount rights had been unjustly and unwarrantably interfered with, and it soon became obvious to one accustomed, as I had been, to observe the workings of the human mind, that he fancied my presence afforded the chief obstacle to the success of his nefarious schemes. In this he was mistaken. The high-toned virtue of Ellen's soul, the undeviating rectitude of her principles, were the obstacles to his success. *I* was but the self-constituted guard to prevent them falling a sacrifice to force. But, acting upon

his own preconceived notions, the vain youth sought, by every shallow artifice in his power, to separate me as often as possible from the object of my care.

I well remember the day when, in the prosecution of this design, he entered, and apparently kindly entreated me, as a foreigner and a stranger, to join a party then assembled at his father's castle to enjoy the noble diversion of a deer hunt. At first I peremptorily refused, but urged by the persuasions of Edward, who was to be of the party, and still more so by the knowledge that the young chieftain himself must be present there, I at length consented. Methought, when his mission had so far been successful, I observed a look of peculiar satisfaction gleam upon his countenance. But it was of momentary duration, and passed as quickly as the livid flash of lightning that darts across the waste of a dark and blasted heath. That evening he departed

on his return, and on the morrow we followed him to his father's halls.

Our way, during the greater part of our short journey, lay through a wild and romantic country, crossed by many beautiful glens and clear limpid streams. It was on emerging from the gorge of what may truly be termed one of those mountain valleys, that a wide inland lake suddenly burst upon our view. Perched on the summit of an apparently inaccessible cliff that overhung its waters, a frowning castle —the place of our destination—stood. It was an object to be regarded with mingled admiration and awe. Its strong and gloomy character was apparent even from a distance; but as by a long circuit we approached the base of the cliff, on which, like a solitary sentinel, it was perched, and gradually ascended to its principal entrance, full time was allowed to view the predominant points of the situation, and a nearer contemplation of these certainly

did not detract from the feelings with which it had at first been viewed.

In the centre of a large square, the principal tower or keep, a building of four stories high, was built. At various intervals, long and narrow windows intersected its thick and massy walls. Surrounding it, was an open court, of some extent, which was defended by a high wall surmounted by parapets, and containing but one solitary gate, or means of entrance. This was defended by two flanking towers of great strength, from which any assailants, hardy enough to have attacked the massy oaken door itself, would have been fearfully annoyed. The whole upper part of this wall was exposed to the ramparts of the inner keep, from which, in cases of necessity, a foe who had succeeded in approaching thus far might have been effectually assailed. Outside, it was surrounded by a deep dry ditch, the only passage over which

was a drawbridge without ledges, and so narrow that it would have afforded but a precarious footing for two individuals passing abreast. On the outside of this ditch again, and at some little distance from its nearer side, an outer wall, of great height and strength, surrounded the entire building and its numerous appurtenances. On its summit were ranged innumerable square towers, of two stories in height, placed at regular distances from each other, and the tops of these, as well as the intervening spaces of the wall, were surmounted by a parapet with embrazures or crennels. In the centre a huge gateway frowned, the door of which, studded with innumerable bolts of iron, seemed as if it would, of itself, have bid defiance to any human power. But over it a strong tower was built, from the centre of which an iron portcullis was constructed to descend: and in front, on either side, it was defended by an outwork or barbican, sur-

mounted by other towers which, from their situation, commanded the narrow drawbridge, that, in like manner, as over the inner ditch, here crossed the outer fosse. Between the two bridges there appeared but this difference, that the outer one, save when used, was constantly suspended in the air, while the inner one, turning on a pivot, generally reposed in its natural position.

While I gazed on this structure, I could not help thinking of the extent of cruelty that might be practised within its walls, without a whisper of it ever reaching the light of day; of the number of unhappy beings who might there be confined, without the chance or prospect of escape being afforded; and I inwardly prayed that none who were dear to me might ever come within its precincts. I even felt a cold chill freeze, as it were, my vitals, while I crossed the drawbridge and entered the portals of the outer gate; but these feelings were soon

dispersed by the open and benevolent manner of the chieftain, who came forward to welcome us to his abode.

We entered the keep, and, as we did so, were saluted by a loud burst of national music, which continued till we had gained the principal hall or apartment in the tower. It was a large vaulted room, hung round with suits of armour, fashioned at many a different period, and mingled with numerous trophies of the chase. Its gloomy appearance did not belie the promise made by the exterior of the building, and as the light of day streamed through the long narrow windows, and fell upon the chequered floor, and partially glanced upon the grim trophies which adorned the walls, and occasionally threw a gleam athwart the harsh features, and on the square-built forms of the multitudinous assemblage moving to and fro beneath, and more directly darted on the

rough forms of many huge and shaggy dogs basking in its rays, it would have required little imagination in him, who for the first time witnessed such a scene, to believe that he had been suddenly transported into the den and society of a lawless banditti, instead of the princely halls and goodly company of a highland chief.

As strangers, we were received with marked hospitality. It is a characteristic of the nation in which few individuals ever fail;—and in the present instance, if it were to be judged of by the extent of the preparations, it was liberal indeed. Soon after mid-day, on the summons of the seneschal of the castle, we proceeded to the banquetting hall, following in the train of many pipers, who caused the vaulted roof to ring again with the violence of their efforts. Although the sun was at his height, this apartment was lighted by the blaze of innumerable branches of pine, stuck in iron sconces. From

the resinous substance contained in the wood, a bright and steady blaze was emitted, and a strong, though by no means disagreeable, aromatic flavour diffused throughout the room.

In the centre, a huge oak table was placed, groaning under a load of provision, consisting principally of enormous joints and masses of venison, ox flesh, sheep, apparently roasted entire, wild fowl, and game of all descriptions, and, in the middle, the head of a monstrous wild boar, highly decorated and adorned. Around the table, rows of oaken benches were placed, on which, after some considerable discussion on the subject of precedence, the different chieftains were seated, each attended by his henchman, fully armed, standing like an iron statue at his back. At a given signal, a door opposite to that which we had entered burst open, a whole host of menials and re-

tainers rushed in, and seated themselves promiscuously at the lower end of the well-furnished board. At another signal, the business of the hour commenced, every one, without ceremony, attacking and helping himself from the dish before him, which he carved, or rather mutilated, with a small dirk, which, if it did not form an ornamental, was at least an useful, part of his appointments.

The goblet, in the meantime, continued to make its rounds. Those at the upper end of the table swallowing large potations of ale, and even stronger liquors, while those at the lower end were regaled with huge flaggons of liquor of a less potent kind.

The ravenous appetites of the feeders being at length satisfied, the mangled remains of the repast were removed, and the bards or seneschals were introduced. These alternately chaunted the high deeds of the ancestors of

the various chieftains present, till the inspiring effect of song, aided no doubt by the quantities of potent beverage consumed, inflamed the hot blood of more than one of their descendants; and bloodshed, in all probability, would have ensued, had not an aged chieftain, apparently watching for the moment, arose and stilled the tumult by proposing a cup to the prosperity of the roof-tree under which they sat.

"When he breaks a bone may he suck the marrow"—shouted, in their native language, all those who were still able to articulate. A huge beaker was then introduced, which silently but effectually made its rounds. Brimful was it poured out to each guest; slowly it was drained; and, with the weaker, the consequence was immediate. Down they fell, even where they sat, and the business of the henchman then was to remove each to his

place of rest, while the stronger could scarcely perform the same office for themselves.

As for me, I had claimed the privilege of a stranger. I could not enter into scenes such as I have attempted to describe. They were contrary to the manners of those countries in which the greater part of my years had been passed; they were at variance with the habits of my early, yet not forgotten, days. They had nothing in common with, nothing approaching to, the quiet and primitive enjoyments of my own bright land; and I retired to my repose, under the full conviction that the wisest of mankind was never more mistaken than when he said "there is nothing new under the sun." In the lapse of my long life, I had traversed many countries—I had been in every quarter of the globe;—with a scrutinizing eye, and the wisdom of accumulated ages, I had searched the heart of man,—

but never had I beheld him place the height of earthly pleasure and enjoyment in banishing the best of his Maker's gifts from his mind, and reducing himself to the level of the brute creation. This, I said, is surely something new, and I laid me down with an awakened feeling of curiosity, to know what the morrow might bring forth in this strange land.

CHAPTER VII.

"'The dryvars thorowe the woodes went
For to reas the dear,
Bomen bickarte uppone the bent
With their broad aras cleare.

"'Then the wyld thorowe the woodes went
On every syde sheare;
Grea-hounds thorowe the greaves glent
For to kyll their dear.

ANCIENT BALLAD OF CHEVY CHASE.

'Your vessels, and your spells provide,
Your charms, and every thing beside."

MACBETH.

It is wonderful with how much rapidity the imagination connects external sounds with the circumstances of a dream. On the following morning, fancy had transported me to my own

sunny land, and I lay listening to the sounds of sweet music till the loud clash of the timbrel aroused me from my dream. I awoke, and that which I had mistaken for the wild music of the East, was converted into the loud baying of a whole tribe of dogs, the discordant yelling of a hundred bagpipes, and the no less discordant sounds of innumerable voices, screaming and hallooing at their highest pitch.

I arose rapidly, and, from the narrow window of my apartment, viewed a heart-stirring scene in the court beneath. All was life and motion. The ban-dogs in their leashes yelled, impatient for the sport, while their fierce gambols almost overcame the gillies appointed to their care. The numerous pipers walked to and fro, with proud and haughty step, as if each were a chieftain in his own undoubted right; his occupation only interrupted by an angry exclamation, or a muttered curse, as the fettered

dogs in their gambols interrupted his career. The chieftains, with their nodding plumes and feathers of the heron's wing, and various coloured tartans, all sparkling in the morning sun, conversed in small groups, occasionally stooping to caress a favourite terrier of the true, rough-haired, highland breed, or examining their hunting apparatus, to see that it was in order for the business of the day. A grey mist hung upon the mountain tops, and slumbered on the lake, while the early dew sparkled like a thousand diamonds upon an emerald waste, as the slanting beams of the sun fell upon the verdure of the surrounding hills and dales.

While I gazed, the drawbridge was lowered, the castle gates were opened, and with shouts of joy the numerous train began to issue forth. I hastened to join the party, and when I reached the court-yard, found Edward with the chieftains, preparing to follow their at-

tendant vassals and the dogs. The usual greetings over, we all proceeded on our way, and after having traversed hill and dale for the space, it may be, of an hour or two, the whole party assembled once more at the place of rendezvous. Instructions being then issued in Gaelic, the dogs, with their keepers, broke off in various directions, while the chieftains, seated on the mountain heath, commenced their morning repast. This being finished, and the fragments cleared away, each individual lay down among the long and flowery heather, silently to await the approach of the game, with a well trained hound crouching at his side.

As the sun increased in heat, the mountain mist began to clear away, and gradually disappear, till at last, a breeze springing up, it rolled down the valley like a racehorse at his speed, disclosing, on either side of our position, a wild interminable range of hills,

whose mingled tops appeared to ascend even to the clouds. In front, a narrow valley stretched its length, at the farther end of which the rising hills and wild glens and valleys were clad with towering trees and tangled brushwood, that formed a cover, almost impenetrable to man or beast; behind, a broken pass lay, leading to a wide extent of more open and level country.

These observations I had time to make, while we lay, for the space of some hours, without a whisper or a sound being heard to break the dead and solemn stillness that reigned in this wild scene. Had a chance traveller passed, he would have gazed upon the fair country before him, but he could not have imagined that, amidst its stillness, scores of living beings lay concealed.

At last, a faint and distant sound was heard, swelling and dying upon the air like a passing breath of wind. Then, louder and more near,

a solitary, wild halloo, occasionally burst upon the ear. The mingled, yet distant, hum of many voices succeeded to these sounds, till at length, as the tinchel narrowed in its course, the baying of many dogs, and the halloos and shouts of the hunters broke in full chorus on the listening band—and a whole herd of wild deer, with huge and brandished antlers, like the leafless branches of a far-spread forest, appeared at the upper end of the valley.

For many seconds, the deer stood snuffing the air, as if they apprehended danger to be nigh. Then, urged forward by the narrowing circle around them, they proceeded slowly on their way. A few straggling balls were discharged, and one or two wounded stags fell upon the ground. The body of the herd still pursued its way, till, under the guidance of a stately red deer, it had nearly reached the spot where the sportsmen lay concealed. Again it paused,

and the males stamped upon the ground, and snuffed the air, and threw their branching antlers aloft, as if in defiance of their foes, while at the same time, although all was apparently motionless and still in front, they shewed a disposition to retreat. It was too late. The slow hounds, with the hunters, closed the valley in their rear, and covered the steep sides of the neighbouring hills. With loud shouts they approached, discharging various missiles at random amidst the herd, till, as if one desperate attempt were all that remained, it broke down the valley at a noble speed, and, as a last resource, sought to gain the plain below. Then the still heather teemed with life. A loud halloo crashed upon the ear, the fleet hounds were slipped, and before the imagination could comprehend the sudden change, they were in full cry after the now dispersed and timid deer.

It was a glorious sight to see that dispersed

herd scouring over the level plain. They made for a far distant pass in the mountain's gorge, while the fleet hounds were close upon their trail. But long ere they reached the pass, the active hunters, taking advantage of a short cut across the mountain's brow, had occupied it before them, and death met them, even in the very spot to which they had fled for safety. Terrified, and maddened by despair, they rushed back amongst the hounds that followed, and sought to escape the destruction that awaited them, by retracing once more their rapid flight. I was unprepared for this movement, and my ignorance of the chase had well nigh met with a punishment it scarce deserved. With a few others I had followed upon the track of the retreating deer, and when they returned, and came down upon us like the rushing of a mountain torrent, we stood, defenceless, in their front. Instantly all around, as if struck by the lightning's flash, fell pros-

trate upon their faces, and these, like the willow that bends before the blast, were left unscathed by the passing storm. But I fell not till borne to the ground by the antlers of a passing stag, and then I heard the trampling of many feet around me, till the remainder of the herd had passed upon their way.

It was long before I arose from the prostrate situation into which I had been thrown, and then I found that these Nimrods of the hill and dale had left me to my fate, and each followed the pleasure or the profit of the chase.

"So it is," I exclaimed, as I seated myself upon the trunk of a scathed and withered tree—"so it is with every one that boasts the name of man. Let the sorrows of his fellow-men be, but for a moment, placed in the scale with the enjoyment of his own pleasures, and how quickly the lightly balanced beam ascends into the air."

The thought, however, had scarcely passed

through my mind, when I discovered Edward, with an aged Highlander, hurrying towards me. That kind friend had observed, from a distance, the danger I had incurred, and wasting no time in useless enquiries, had hurried to the Leech, knowing that if aught of mischance had befallen me he would come attended with the best assistance time would allow him to procure.—Luckily for me, however, the injury I had sustained was confined to a slight bruise upon the shoulder.

The Leech who approached was a man of grave and solemn aspect.—He was clad in the garb of his country, over which a long white beard flowed nearly to his waist. Like all his countrymen who possessed the science of herbs, he pretended also to that of second sight. As he approached, his cold grey eyes were fixed upon me with an expression that I could not love. He paused: and, with that immoveable look yet fixed upon me, stood,

for many minutes, motionless and still. At length he advanced, and peered closely into my face and eyes—"Strange," he muttered to himself, "his brow is open as the spring-time of the year, yet the wisdom of many days is seated in his eyes."

Methought a slight shade seemed to flit across Edward's countenance as the old Highlander proceeded to examine the wound I had received. The application of a few simple herbs soon relieved the little pain I endured, and when the Highlander arose from his knees I too raised myself from the recumbent posture in which I had lain, and followed him to the castle. As we proceeded on our way, I observed the deep mists of thoughtfulness overshadow the countenance of the Highlander. He seemed engaged in silent communion with his own spirit, while passing events made no impression upon his mind. In this guise we reached the outer gate of

the castle, when, suddenly pausing, the Highlander drew his hand rapidly across his forehead, as if to clear away the supervening mists that shrouded his intellectual powers, and, standing aside, permitted Edward to pass the bridge before him. I advanced with the same intention, slightly bowing to my attendant as I did so; but he stepped forward, close to my side, and again peering into my face and eyes, with a look and aspect of the deepest veneration, raised his plumeless bonnet from his brow, and his eyes to heaven, and in a low, but deep and thrilling tone, whispered—" Are the dead of other ages thus permitted to tread upon the earth?" —I started, visibly started, while I felt that my unbelief in the existence of that strange power which can shadow forth and embody, as it were, in reality, the events of coming ages, was strangely staggered.—I paused not, however, to enquire into the meaning of the

words of the seer, but hurriedly followed Edward into the hall of the castle.

There, the same scene as that of the preceding day was enacted, with this difference, that the loud boasting of their hunting exploits, in which the younger chieftains seemed to vie with each other, bestowed upon it a more rude and boisterous character, though, heaven knows, there was little need of such distinction. Towards the close of the repast, an occurrence of a character somewhat different took place. While mirth and riot were at the loudest, the aged Highland seer appeared at the lower end of the hall, and in a moment all was still. With slow steps and downcast eyes he advanced to where I sat. He spoke not, although his lips moved as if communing with himself. He looked not around, but I saw that his pale grey eyes, glancing from beneath their long white lashes, were steadfastly fixed upon me. He laid one

hand upon my shoulder, and with the other clasped mine in his long, gaunt, and bony fingers. He then held me at arms' length, and raised his eyes enquiringly to my face. Steadfastly and seriously he perused every lineament of it; then, quitting the grasp he had laid upon my shoulder, he seized my hand within both of his, and earnestly examined the lines traced upon its palm.—While his examination proceeded, I could perceive that the cold perspiration broke through every pore—and, ere it had concluded, the seer trembled in every joint and limb. "Woe is me"—he at length exclaimed as he dropt my hand,—"Woe is me—I have seen years lengthened out till the winter of old age had almost entered into the spring of a second childhood—I have seen oaks of the forest, that boasted of hundreds of years, standing, as it were, in the freshness and vigour of youth—but when hath eye seen, or ear heard of, the

vital principle that hath existed since the full grown oaks of the forest were as seedlings—that shall exist till the hills and the valleys be in mingled confusion, and the mountains crumble into dust? Woe—woe—woe—unhappy one;—the curse of the Highest rests upon thee!"

The aged Highlander shook his white head, and slowly retired, even as he had entered, from the hall. A dead—a solemn stillness reigned around. Every eye was fixed on me, and methought the ban dogs and the hounds glared fearfully upon me, while they crouched and trembled at my presence. There was but one countenance on which a smile of scorn appeared—it was Edward's—and I knew that I still retained my friend. I saw that his partly foreign education had much freed his mind from the superstitions of his native land.—But, even while I saw this, my heart sunk within me, for I knew that the curse

was upon me—and that, go where I would, I was still rejected of my God.

Slowly I arose—and, amidst many a scowling look, slowly retired to my place of rest. That night it was aught but a place of rest to me. Feverish and irritated—disturbed by a thousand vain apprehensions, I paced up and down the whole length of my apartment, till the bright full moon, rising over the brow of the opposite hill, gleamed calmly and coldly on my face. I approached, and gently opened the lattice of my window, to gaze upon the lovely scene before me. No sound broke upon the stillness of the night, save the occasional baying of a watch-dog, or the sharp bark of an angry terrier, disturbed in his repose.

How long I remained in this situation I know not; but I was upon the point of seeking a short repose, with the full determination of departing from my present abode with the earliest dawn of day, when two voices, seem-

ingly in deep and earnest conversation, fell upon my ear. I could not mistake them. They were the voices of the young chieftain of the castle, and the wretched disciple of Esculapius, who had attended me at the mansion of my friends. I heard the name of Ellen Dinwiddie pass their unhallowed lips, and I took not even the trouble of excusing to myself the measures I adopted, to obtain a knowledge of the subject of their conversation. I have often since thought that I could perceive the hand of Providence in the events of that night. Had not those circumstances occurred, which compelled me to pass so many sleepless hours, I would have lain at rest and remained ignorant of a scheme of unexampled villainy, which, had it been carried into effect, would have changed the destiny of much of my future life, and plunged an amiable family into the depths of sorrow and distress. It is thus, however, that the Most High worketh in his

wisdom, it is thus that we are used as instruments in His hand; and, while we deem that the dispensations of a Divine Providence are dealt with unsparing rigour, that all is working for good even unto us.

The voices approached, and, as if in conclusion to some previous remark, I heard the chieftain say—" I will have her—Ellen Dinwiddie must and shall be mine."

" It shall be even as my Lord says," responded the Apothecary, with a low chuckle of delight, as if his mean-born soul entered with joy into the business in which he was engaged.

" But how, man, how!"—exclaimed the impatient chieftain. " I know thou art fertile in expedients, but how *this* is to be accomplished, save by main force, I cannot tell."

Another low chuckle of delight expressed the Apothecary's conviction of the falseness of the chieftain's views. But he spoke not,

till I heard, as it were, the sound of gold—of much gold—shaken in his hand, and then he uttered, in a low, sententious voice—" There are certain medicines"—

" Well, well," interrupted the chieftain—" I know there are; you remember"—

" Hush!" exclaimed the Apothecary, in an alarmed and agitated voice—" not these—not these." " There are certain medicines—*harmless* medicines—which, skilfully administered, produce the *appearance*—mark me, the *appearance* only, of death. This appearance, according to the—the *skill* of the physician, may be made to endure for a shorter or a longer space, as may seem desirable—and—

" To the point, to the point"—again interrupted the impatient chieftain, " how am I to benefit by this?"

" Simply thus"—answered his coadjutor—" Such medicines, skilfully administered, produce the appearance I have mentioned; inter-

ment, temporary interment, followeth. It were an easy matter for any one to possess himself of the supposed body, and, without stealing fire from heaven, to endow it again with the breath of life; and, should this Prometheus, my noble lord, keep his own counsel, he might keep the living dead also, and no one be the wiser of it—ha!"

"Most excellent villain"—exclaimed his noble patron; "your plan likes me well. But who," he added, after a moment's consideration, and lowering his voice almost to a whisper, "who, I pray thee, is to administer this medicine *skillfully* to the damsel. How is this to be accomplished?"

Another low chuckle expressed the Apothecary's conviction of the excellence of his own finished scheme. "I," he chuckled, "I am mediciner to the family—and"—

"A goodly mediciner, truly," growled the

chieftain,—"heaven forbid, most finished villain, that thou shouldest be one of mine."

"And," continued the Apothecary, without seeming to notice the interruption, "and I have been sent for to wait upon the damsel, who hath been somewhat afflicted, early in the morning of the very day that is about to dawn."

"Ha!"—exclaimed the other starting, "so soon!—yet 'tis well—'tis well," he added, in a low tone, "her dark-browed paramour is"—

I held my breath—I strained every nerve to catch the conclusion of the sentence—but at that moment the coadjutors in villainy turned a projecting angle of the castle, and I heard no more. My first thought was to fly instantly to the aid of Ellen, and prevent the infernal and highly-matured scheme, the plan of which I had so providentially overheard, from being carried into execution. But ere I

reached the door, I remembered that the castle-gates were locked, the drawbridge raised, and that no human being could pass, till after the morning light had dawned. I returned to the window, but its height from the ground precluded all idea of descending by that means; and indeed, even if I could have done so, the obstacle presented by the walls and drawbridge still remained. I bethought myself, too, that my departure at so unseasonable an hour, if it should chance to be observed, might perhaps tend to defeat the purpose I had in view; and that, even if it were delayed till the morning's dawn, I would, at all events, be at the mansion of Mr. Dinwiddie as soon as the wretched compounder of drugs possibly could be.

With a burning forehead, therefore, and a hot fever throbbing in every vein, I threw myself, drest as I was, upon my couch. The fatigue of the previous day, added to the

excitement of the moment, soon threw me into a feverish and disturbed slumber. Strange visions crowded my fancy, and, even while I slept, the idea that I was awake and watched was ever present to my mind. The light of the morning dawned before these uneasy slumbers were dispelled, and when I started suddenly from my couch, I saw the bright sun shining with a bold and free light into my chamber. The apprehension that I might be too late struck upon my heart, and arranging my disordered dress, with the speed of lightning, I darted from my chamber.

The inmates of the castle were too much in the habit of passing to and fro at all hours, after the gates were unbarred, for my early departure to attract notice. I descended the steep, therefore, on which it stood, as I fancied, unobserved, and winding along the lake, was soon hid from view by one of those numerous jutting headlands wherewith its bor-

ders were adorned. I then quickened my pace, for a strange undefined sensation weighed upon my heart, although I knew that life and death depended not upon my speed. To shorten the distance of my journey I crossed a slight eminence before me, and, as I did so, I perceived a boat, which had apparently left the base of the rock, on which the castle was situated, only a few minutes before, gliding swiftly over the surface of the lake. There was but one man in it, whose form and features I could not, at that distance, distinguish. Indeed, so little impression did the circumstance make upon my mind, that scarcely had I noticed it when I altogether forgot it, and proceeded on my way. But thus it is in the passing events of life. We gaze upon those with which our fate is closely linked, without knowing that we have aught on earth to do with them. A few short minutes taught me the truth of this, and shewed how deeply an

important event in my life was connected with the motions of that fragile bark. Had I suspected this, I would have turned aside from the path I then pursued; and yet, I know not that I have aught to mourn over in the event that followed.

A short space of time brought me to the broken ground, nigh the upper end of the lake, and I had scarcely turned one of those masses of rock which entirely hid the castle from my view, when again, at the distance of about a hundred yards before me, I observed the little bark I had seen upon the lake, now quietly resting upon the sands of a narrow bay, formed by the projecting rock I had just passed, and one of a similar character before me. From a point of this latter rock, a figure, wrapt from head to foot in a flowing mantle, arose as I approached. I thought I recognized his air, but I was not left, even for a single instant, in suspense. With a careless, yet determined

look, his mantle was cast aside, and the youthful chieftain of the castle stood before me.

I betrayed no surprise at his approach, but gazed upon him with a look to the full as haughty as his own.

" Well met, proud man!" he exclaimed, in a tone of defiance; " is it thus you repay my father's hospitality, by stealing like a guilty being from his halls?"

" My motions are my own"—I quietly answered. " I came not on *your* asking to your father's halls, and I seek not *your* permission to depart. Yet, wouldest thou know a reason, ask at thine own conscience the question thou hast put to me, and it, perchance, may answer thee."

And thinkest thou, vile slave!" he exclaimed, trembling with the force of his own emotions—"thinkest thou to parry the question I have asked, by riddles such as these?"

"I speak not in riddles," I replied, "I have said that my motions are my own."

"As to that, we shall see," he cried, in a voice of bitter scorn. "Sir Nameless Stranger," and he approached close to me while he spoke through his clenched teeth—"return with me to the castle, or, by the God that made me, thou shalt dearly rue thy refusal!"

"What," I exclaimed in irony, while I burst into a fiendish laugh, the sound of which made him recoil several paces from me—"What—that yonder atrocious villain may have space accorded him *skilfully* to administer his accursed drugs."

I cannot forget the change which came over his countenance while I spoke. The pallid hue of death sat upon his features, while his glaring eye-balls seemed darting from their sockets. He trembled from head to foot, and seemed as one struck with a sudden palsy,

or some enervating disease. While in that state, I sought to pass him, but the motion recalled his disturbed senses, and he darted, with the look and action of a madman, right across my path.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "I dreamt not of this; but I thank thee for the word—for now"—and again he spoke through his clenched teeth—"now! villain—evesdropper—thou shalt die!"

His hand was upon his sword, and he advanced towards me with rapid strides.

"Stop, fool!" I exclaimed, in a voice of thunder—"Stop—I bear a charmed life about me, which thou canst not touch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" he shouted—"Good, good indeed—so the old besotted fool hath imposed upon one as ignorant as himself.—We shall speedily see how much thou hast to owe to thy charmed life,"—and, ere I had time to stand upon my defence, he struck at me with

his broad claymore. I started aside to elude his weapon; but, speedily recovering, he turned upon me with the shouts and fury of a tiger. This time, however, I was prepared, and easily warded off his random and ill-directed blows. It required but a moment's time to shew that he was no master of his weapon; and, besides, I had a manifest advantage over him in the shape of my blade, which was of the sharp-pointed triangular kind then universally worn in those lands whence I had come.

"Thou — thou—fool — fiend — thou come betwixt my heart's desire and me—thou — thou"—he shouted, and every word was accompanied by a blow. He rushed forward—he left me unscathed—unharmed; but my sword passed through his heart, and he fell to the ground—motionless and dead.

I gazed upon the lifeless form before me: the teeth were still clenched, and a frown of

hatred and defiance still sat upon the pale brow. He looked like a sleeper under the influence of a disturbed and horrid dream. The picture was a fearful one, and I turned with loathing from it. I felt no compunction for what I had done; for I knew that I was but the instrument in a higher hand, to rid the world of one whose crimes had already been a disgrace to human nature. "Would the world, however, look upon the act I had committed in the same light?" was a question that occurred rapidly to my mind. There had been no witness to our rencontre; but, for aught I knew, my departure from the castle, perhaps that of the young chieftain too, might have been observed, and I was well aware how rapidly a strong chain of circumstantial evidence might be linked together with an adamantine firmness that no power of mine ever could destroy. Self-preservation, then, strange as it may seem, became the present

object of my mind, and I sought, by concealing the evidence, to do away with the suspicion, of guilt. Hastily, but carefully, I removed the tell-tale stains from my own weapon. I then seized upon the strong blade of my opponent, and, with his own sword, hollowed out a deep grave in the sands of that solitary spot. It was a work of no slight labour; for, after a few feet of the light and superincumbent soil had been removed, I found the ground beneath as hard as the heart of a Memel log. Unweariedly, however, I toiled in my vocation, as if it had been one familiar to my hand, until the blade, that had been more faithful to its master in the execution of many crimes than it was in hewing out for him the unknown grave he so well deserved, snapt in two. With the broken fragment, I continued my work, till I judged the recess to be of sufficient depth, and then, rolling the stiffened body in its plaid, I threw

all that remained of the once haughty and overbearing chieftain into the grave. To pile, first the firm earth, and then the loose sand above him, and carefully to level and smooth it over, till not a trace of what lay beneath could be discerned, was the work of but a few minutes; and, when it was done, I cast the broken pieces of his sword far into the depths of the calm and placid lake.—One thing only now remained, and my work of destruction was complete. I cast my eyes upon the frail bark that, so short a time before, had been impelled over the waters by the powerful arm that now lay motionless and cold. Hastily I gathered together several large fragments of rock; and, first dashing an aperture in the bottom of the vessel, piled them within it, till the gurgling waters rose over its sides, and then closed, many, many fathoms above it, with a look as calm and placid as if they had not lent their aid to complete the work of de-

struction in which I had been engaged. So vanished from the eye of man the last memorial of the ill-fated expedition of one who, for his father's cake, I could have wished had deserved and met a better fate !

CHAPTER VIII.

"In life itself she was so still and fair,
That death, with gentler aspect, withered there;
And the cold flowers her colder hand contain'd,
In that last grasp as tenderly were strain'd,
As if she scarcely felt, but feigned a sleep,
And made it almost mockery yet to weep!"

THE CORSAIR.

"Some moments, aye, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power."

THE GIAOUR.

THE events mentioned at the close of the last Chapter naturally consumed a considerable space of time, and the morning was far advanced ere I reached the abode of Mr. Dinwiddie. To my jaundiced sight, an unnatural

stillness seemed to reign around the mansion, and the chill upon my heart was scarcely removed when I heard the gentle voice of Mary account for the absence of her sister by assuring me that she was merely confined to her apartment from the effects of a passing cold.

"Had the mediciner been sent for?" was the question which immediately passed my trembling lips.

"Yes! — and given her a composing draught."

I started — but instantly suppressing my emotion, I changed the subject of conversation to my late excursion, and gave my friends a rapid detail of all that had occurred. Certain events, which more immediately related to myself, it will readily be believed, I did not mention; and, with regard to Edward, I answered the enquiries of his friends by assuring them that, in the course of the day, they might look for his return. Of this,

however, I by no means felt certain; for an indefinable sensation of evil hung upon my mind. But it was the earnest hope of my heart that he would return, and I met with no disappointment in that hope, for, ere the twilight fell, he arrived.

"What in the world," he exclaimed, laughing, when he saw me, "what in the world occasioned your sudden disappearance! Was it the predictions of that old fool, who assigned to you an immortality upon earth; or the dread of a condign punishment at the hands of his superstitious hearers?"

"Neither"—I answered, smiling, "but I was weary of the scene; and, besides"—I hesitated a moment—"besides I had other reasons for returning here."

"Weighty ones, no doubt," said Edward, with an arch look; "but had you heard the thousand conjectures as to the *mode* of your sudden disappearance, you would, perhaps,

have chosen a more suitable time, and better company wherewith to leave the bustle."

"Better company," I repeated, calmly: "I assure you, my good friend, I left the castle in no company but my own."

"Precisely," said Edward, smiling, "I thought as much: but there are not wanting those to affirm that you were spirited away by the respectable gentleman who hath conferred upon you the gift of many years; and, faugh upon it! that a strange smell of brimstone had been left behind."

"And you, my friend," I exclaimed, in a careless manner, "what said you to this?"

"Indeed, to tell the truth," he answered, "I scarce knew what to say.—Your *ally*, the young chieftain, had departed early upon some excursion, and, of course, was not present to defend you. The smell of brimstone, by the way, I should have thought as likely to have been the remains of *his* sudden disap-

pearance; but, when I thought of the little change that years of suffering and of sorrow had wrought upon your outward appearance, my lips were sealed; and ere the wax of silence was removed, the conversation had taken another turn."

The latter part of Edward's remark was made in a tone, methought, somewhat bordering upon the serious; but I was saved the necessity of any reply by the hurried entrance of Mary, to announce a sudden and alarming change in Ellen's malady.—"Oh! send, send quickly," she cried, "for ———

"Not for that wretch!" I exclaimed, interrupting her, as I started to my feet. But ere the words escaped my lips, Edward had quitted the apartment, and, a moment afterwards, I heard the clatter of his horse's feet as they passed the window where I sat. Mary returned to her place by Ellen's side, and I remained alone to meditate upon the past, and

to look forward with feelings of vague and undefined apprehension to the future.

How long I sat in this contemplative mood, I cannot tell, but I was aroused from my waking dream by the renewed clatter of a horse's feet, and my mind was relieved by hearing but the sound of *one*; for the sight of the apothecary, at that moment, would have been as ratsbane and hemlock to my heart. Edward entered the room, and, in a hurried tone, informed me that the mediciner had that day suddenly disappeared, no one could tell why or wherefore. *I* could but guess the cause, for I dreamt not that any discovery could have been made by him to render necessary so sudden a movement upon *his* part.

"He has escaped the hangman's hands," I muttered to myself, as I hastily followed Edward to the couch of the sainted sufferer.

There an affecting scene presented itself to view. The pale beautiful moon shone through

the open window; the soft mild breeze of an early autumn eve sighed and whispered, as it stole through the profuse clusters of clematis, with which Ellen's own hand had decked her fairy bower. At the further end of the apartment, reclining upon a low couch, lay the attenuated form of my gentle Ellen. Over that couch, her fond remaining parent hung in speechless agony, while, before it, the scarcely less inanimate form of Mary knelt, with one pale hand fondly and affectionately clasped within her own.

At the sound of my approaching footsteps, Ellen turned her eyes towards me, and sweetly, gently smiled. She held out her hand, and I sank upon my knees, and pressed it to my lips; but it felt cold and clammy to the touch, and I saw the damp dews of death already settling upon her brow. Her lips moved, but she uttered no sound, and when, in the light of that pale moon, I looked upon

the beautiful transparent hue of her skin, my mind misgave me, and I deemed that the wretched pander to his master's pleasures had not so *skilfully* administered his medicines, but that, for once, he had exceeded his commission, and fairly dried the springs of life within the sufferer's breast.

Oh! what unspeakable anguish did I endure, while the succeeding hour rolled by as if every minute had been lengthened to an age. At the end of that time a change, which left no room for doubt, had taken place. While there is life, it has been said, there is hope, but now, even while life still lingered, hope had departed from the heart of every fond gazer. The light, but quickened, breathing—the scarcely perceptible motion of the heart, which had once beat so high with the warm feelings of youth and love—the relaxed pressure of the soft but attenuated hand—the drooping of the fringed eyelids over their blue and gentle orbs

—the smile, as of angel birth, that played around the parted lips—all spoke of that incomprehensible separation of the spirit from its mortal clay, the mystery of which the united wisdom of ages has been unable to solve. There was a deep stillness in the house of death ; the falling of a seared leaf upon the green sward would have struck upon the ear ; each suppressed his own breathing, as if fearing to mingle aught of merely human birth with the sigh which wafted a spirit to its God, when the head of the sufferer fell back upon its pillow, and the long suppressed sob, escaping from the mourner's heart told, that the fear of disturbing *her* repose no longer existed there.

I have often remarked that, after life has fled, the mourner speaks in whispered tones, and treads in tiptoe silence through the desolate apartment—

"Fond wretch—as if *his* step disturb'd the *dead*."

He cannot realize to his own mind the change which has taken place; and many a long day must elapse before he speaks again in his own free and unembarrassed tones, and treads once more with his wonted firm and fearless step.

It was so with those who now gazed upon the face of the pale sleeper. After the bursting of the first long suppressed sob had passed from the listener's ear, her fond father was seen, still hanging, in all the eloquent expression of silent grief, over the couch of his lost treasure. Mary—motionless and still—yet grasped the now truly unconscious sufferer's hand within her own. Edward—while the tears rolled down his manly cheeks—stood at the foot of the couch, and gazed upon the cold face before him, as if he scarcely could believe that the spirit which had so long shone there, with an aspect so beautifully bright, was for ever gone; and when, with gentle violence, I

led them from the apartment, even their very breathing seemed to be again suppressed, and they trod as if their light footsteps could indeed disturb the dead.

In a few hours, they spoke calmly and deliberately of the spirit that was gone; but it was with that forced, unearthly calmness that tells *despair* is busy with the heart. I longed to say unto them, in the words of Holy Writ, "she is not dead, but sleepeth," but my mind misgave me, and, even while I spoke the words of comfort, I feared to raise in the hearts of the mourners a single hope that might yet prove to be vain. But while I thus feared; while I thus trembled for the issue; while my heart thus misgave me, *hope*, strong and buoyant, still resided there, and I could not—would not—believe that I was again left a solitary wanderer upon the wide surface of the globe—no human being in existence who *could* feel the slightest interest in my wayward fate.

On the following day, every appearance remained unchanged. The aspect and the hue of death were on Ellen's face, and I saw the treasure of my heart decked out in the cold cerements of the grave, adorned with the sad habit of her early bridal, and many a fresh and blooming flower strewed upon her bier. I trembled;—but hope departed not from me. "L'ultima che si perde è la speranza"—and to *Hope* I clung, even while the voice of Despair was speaking to my heart.

I spoke not—breathed not, however, to others a whisper of my thoughts. I heard them, with the calmness of settled grief, with tearless eyes, and a smile upon their lips, talk of the kind and affectionate heart that beat no more. They knew not then the loss they had sustained—they were not *alone*—there was yet a tie between the living and the dead, for the cold grave had not shut out from their longing

eyes the inanimate form they had been so long accustomed to behold, in all the pride of beauty and of youth ; and, till that hour arrived, the long, the dreary separation would not be felt to be complete. I have seen those, who, at the death of a beloved friend, could remain apparently unmoved, and betray no outward signs of grief, on the day of that last painful ceremony, gaze with listless and uncomprehending eye on all that passed before them, or give way to the wildest and most uncontrollable bursts of passionate despair.

I spoke not—yet, day and night, I continued to watch with unwearied patience by the side of her I loved. It was towards the dawn of the third morning, when I fancied I beheld a change take place. Methought I saw a slight—a scarcely perceptible—tinge upon the pale sleeper's cheek. My heart beat with a feeling approaching to suffocation ; I bounded

from my seat;—it was but the reflection of a newly blown rose that cast the blush upon her cheek; I removed the flower, the same pallid hue overspread the sleeper's face, and I sunk back with the bitter feelings of disappointed hope gnawing at my heart.

Now, indeed, I began to fear the worst. I would have given worlds for a moment's interview with the accursed mediciner, but he had disappeared, and was no where to be found. I arose, with the intention of commanding a last and diligent search to be made for him, when I suddenly became aware that a change had really taken place on Ellen's countenance. There was no treacherous and deceiving flower near, the reflection of which might have caused that living hue, and again cheated me into a moment's false and faithless joy. A slight—slight tinge appeared upon her cheek, and methought her lips, too, had assumed a

fresher look. The effects of the mediciner's drugs were wearing off, and *now* I hastened to gladden the hearts of my friends with the intelligence.

Much caution was necessary in imparting the communication I had to make, but, when I plainly said, "She is not dead," they shook their heads in mournful silence, and I could perceive that they fancied grief had disturbed my brain. For many reasons, I could not detail the history which, I believe, would at once have brought conviction to their doubting minds, but I persisted in my declaration with a voice so calm and a manner so unchanged, that, at last, I either made an impression upon their hearts, which surely could not have been backward to receive so glad a truth, or, at least, they suffered me to believe I did.

Again then, but now accompanied by those who were dear to me as a right hand, or a right eye, I returned, unwearied, to my post. I

gazed upon the face of the fancied dead; she lay like an innocent infant in a calm slumber.—There was a slight tinge upon her cheek, and a slight colour on her parted lips—both, however, were more like the first faint dawnings of a hectic flush than the natural hues of health.—No breath passed her lips—no pulsation could be felt at her heart—and, save that the cadaverous look of death had passed away from her cheek and brow, the gazer might have deemed that he looked upon a form chisselled from the fairest and most spotless marble.

Two long days passed away, and, with the exception of the signs I have mentioned, no further symptoms of returning life were visible. Again my friends relapsed into the state of despondence from which a momentary feeling of excitement had raised them. In a calm composed manner they proceeded to arrange every thing for the interment of

their beloved, which was fixed to take place upon the following day. It was in vain that I remonstrated on the impropriety of this premature arrangement. At first, they soothed me as they would have done a wayward child; but this only irritated my temper, and, raving like a madman, I vowed that while life remained within *me* (God of heaven—what a vow) they should not remove the remains of my beloved from their home.

The good old Mr. Dinwiddie attempted to reason me into what he deemed a more rational state of mind. I only answered him with a shout of wild unearthly laughter, for then, indeed, I was in a truly excited state, and bursting from him, fled with the speed of lightning to the room where Ellen lay. There, once more, I resumed my watching. The still calmness of the scene before me, while it soothed my ruffled temper, only fixed, more immoveably, the determination of my

mind. Hour after hour passed away—midnight came—still no further change took place; when, worn out with watching, I closed my eyes and sunk into a gentle slumber. So slight, however, was my sleep, that I believe the falling of a leaf would have awakened me. As it was, I have a dreamy remembrance of being roused by the striking of a distant clock. I started up, and at that moment a gentle sigh fell upon my ear. I looked around—Ellen's eyes were open, and fixed upon me with a half unconscious gaze. A glad—a joyous feeling played around my heart. I darted towards her couch, and, kneeling by her side, forced a few drops of a powerful cordial into her mouth. With a slight effort she swallowed it, and, shortly afterwards, became completely sensible of her situation.—I supported her on my breast, while one arm encircled her waist. *Her* arm was thrown around my neck, her head rested upon my

shoulder, and my cheek, glowing with excitement, was pressed against her still pale, but now animated, forehead. I felt her warm heart beat rapidly under the pressure of my hand; and, had the riches of a hundred worlds been offered me at that moment, to forego the happiness I enjoyed, I would have spurned them with foul scorn and indignation from me.—Oh! should I be doomed to wander upon this earth for thousands of years yet to come, memory will ever look back upon the extacy of that hour as upon one of those green spots which cheer the sameness of its wide and desolated waste.

"How long I have slept!"—the gentle voice of Ellen at length murmured in my ear.

"Yes, love—you have indeed"—I answered "but now you are quite well"—

"I feel very weak," she replied, and I ventured to press her to my heart as she spoke. But upon this scene I cannot dwell.

Suffice it to say that, ere the morning dawned, Ellen became acquainted with all—every thing that had passed since I last parted from her. The warm feelings—I had almost said, the *gratitude*, of her heart, were more evinced in looks than words. In such looks there is much of silent eloquence—sometimes more than in the fondest words the tongue can frame; but when, with winning frankness, Ellen placed her hand within mine, and hid her glowing cheek upon my shoulder, while she softly murmured—"You are entitled to the life you have at so much risk preserved," the words pierced to my heart with the rapidity of the lightning's glance, and awoke a glowing feeling there that spoke of happiness for many a year to come.

It were, indeed, a vain attempt to describe the extacy of her friends at this, to them, unexpected recovery of their lost darling.—The good old Mr. Dinwiddie's joy vented

itself in almost incoherent thanks to Him in whose hands are the destinies of all.—Edward spoke not, but he clasped his sister's hand, and looked in her face, as if he scarcely could believe his senses. Mary wept and laughed by turns—yet, amidst her laughter and her weeping, she ever and anon threw herself into her sister's arms and clasped her to her heart of hearts, as if dreading that some untoward accident might yet tear her from them.

But, with one remark, let me draw a veil over this scene. I have seen much of human nature, and in the innermost recesses of my heart I feel that a well regulated mind alone can, unhinged, withstand the sudden and rapid change occasioned by the flowing of a full tide of joy when the heart had sunk in utter hopelessness beneath the ebbing waters of despair.

CHAPTER IX.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when gray hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to the grave!

SHELLEY.

A FEW short weeks after the occurrence of the events I have just narrated, saw me united to my darling Ellen. It was an hour—a day—of festivity to all. There were rejoicings at home and rejoicings abroad. The rich shared in our mirth—the poor partook of our bounty. I was congratulated by all, and these

congratulations came from no hollow hearts, and they fell upon no thankless ear. I was fully sensible of the treasure I had won; yet sometimes, when I gazed upon that treasure, I felt more even than a miser's acutest pains. He only feels that, sooner or later, he must be torn from the hoarded objects of his affection, and in so feeling he has this consolation, that, when the hour of his departure has arrived, he will no longer be sensible of his loss; while *I* knew that, even in my day, the dearest object of my love would be torn from me, and I—I would be left behind, daily—hourly—constantly to mourn over, and be sensible of the irreparable loss I had sustained. Reader!—dost thou ask if I was happy then? Listen, and know. While I clasped my youthful bride to my heart—while, for the first time in our wedded lives, she hid her blushes in her husband's breast, I prayed, once and again—for prayer consists not in the bended knee, nor in

any set or given form of words—I prayed in my heart's core, that the curse might be removed from me, and my day reduced to the limits of a mortal life, even as those of the glad trembler I clasped unto my heart! Foolish, foolish hope—vain, presumptuous prayer—idle dream. My destiny was engraven with a pen of steel upon the surface of an adamantine rock, and yet, fool that I was, I could imagine that *my* tears were to blot it out—that my prayers, which were as an *abomination* in the sight of God, could alter the immutable decree of almost countless years.

Let no one, however, suppose that my life was altogether devoid of enjoyment. There is no situation, whatever it may be, in the present state of existence, that has not, in a greater or lesser degree, its moments of happiness interspersed throughout its dullest hours of care; and when I could cast behind me the sad reality of my fate, and sink it into oblivion,

as if I had drank of Lethe's stream, I was happy, most exquisitely happy! But of this I cannot *now* think. When I attempt to do so, a dark cloud floats across my brain, and I behold a thousand gibing, mocking fiends holding out their fleshless hands, and pointing, gazing at me, as their own. Away—away—ye foul fiends—ye dark-browed demons of a lower world. Can hell give up its own?

Alas, how my distempered fancy wanders—yet I must resume—I must nerve myself to my task, and, if it may be, dream over again those hours the beauty of which the lapse of many years has not been able to efface from the enduring tablets of memory.

Soon after our union, Ellen and I removed from the house of her excellent father, to take possession of a beautifully situated cottage upon the borders of the lake. It stood upon a neck of land jutting far into its silvery waters,

surrounded by many a bright and flowering shrub, and protected from rude blasts by the stately height of hundreds of forest trees. Behind, the steep hill rose, almost like a precipice, from the waters of the lake, and, betwixt it and them, the only road that solitary place could boast of, wound its serpentine and mazy form, now along a gently rising slope, now up an almost trackless steep, and anon through the verdure of some sweetly smiling vale. Before, the waters of the lake lay; and in the midst of them a little island seemed to float upon their surface. Often, at the calm hour of sunset, with my own Ellen resting upon my arm, have I gazed upon that isle, and its wilderness of shrubs and flowers, and its green slopes, and the mouldering turrets of its ruined castle, and the blue sky that hung over it, just tinged with the last golden rays of the departing sun, and the calm, calm waters encir-

cling all in their embrace, till my fancy peopled it with the bright beings of another and a better world.

Day after day passed away in this sweet spot, and if contentment can give peace of mind, we ought to have enjoyed that treasure in a great degree. The dwelling of the Dinwiddies lay within the distance of a short mile, and we often, indeed daily, met. Mary and her sister were still inseparable, and I scarcely ever returned from those short morning excursions I was in the habit of taking amidst the surrounding mountains, but I found the sisters together, either indulging in a short ramble along the borders of the lake—reading the work of some favourite author, or occupied in the manufacture of some ornamental or useful piece of embroidery. The history of one day might suffice for that of many. My home was ever lit with the smiles of fondness

and affection—ever cheerful—ever happy; and if, perchance, I was detained from it for a period longer than usual, I was sure to find my return welcomed by a bright and radiant face—my presence greeted with smiles of gladness and of joy.

I have known those who have scoffed at the warmth of a young affection; yet, in my day, I have found no pleasure equal to that of knowing that you are loved, even as you love. The heart may be cold and sad—weary and afflicted;—but even when the darkest clouds of sorrow lour around—when the contempt of a cruel and unfeeling world is poured upon it, and the keen arrows of disappointment fester in its lacerated core, it still has one bosom on which its sorrows may be pillowed, one breast whose every pulse beats with a throb responsive to its own, and to this conclusion it must then arrive—that there can be no enjoyment

upon earth so pure and beautiful as that bestowed by the unchanging fondness of a woman's first love.

Often, when the sun was setting behind the mountains of the far west, and a dim religious twilight threw its sombre hue over that part of the lake which slept beneath their shadow, while the remainder beyond lay like a mirror tinged with a thousand golden tints, and reflecting from its polished surface the neighbouring mountains with all their rich and variegated colours—often, in such an hour, did I, with my sweet bride, glide across the calm waters, in our little bark; no unhallowed eye near, to gaze upon our sacred solitude—no sound, save the occasional cry of the mountain eagle hastening to his nest, to disturb its repose.

It was on one of those beautiful still evenings, towards the end of summer, which so much resemble in their placid beauty the close

of day in the fairest of southern climes, that we were thus engaged. I remember the moment well—I had rested on my oars to enjoy the beauty of the scene ;—the day had been oppressively hot—and now the perfume of a hundred plants came wafted from the shore with a delicious fragrance—a balmy coolness—on their breath. A solemn stillness pervaded earth, air, and water, when Ellen, in a subdued and almost melancholy tone, addressed me.

"I sometimes fancy," she said, "that the few last years of my life have been a dream; all has been so calm—so beautiful—so sweet. I could scarcely imagine a lot on earth so bright; and now the desire—the prayer of my heart is, that we may leave these scenes together, and together speed to even a better and fairer world, where we shall never part again."

I started—and I believe a change came over my countenance, while I inwardly prayed that her wish might be fulfilled, although, at the

same time, I felt and knew the utter inutility of my prayer. Pure and sinless being, could not even yours avail?

" Perhaps, Ellen," I answered, " it may yet be so. No one can tell what is hidden in the womb of time, and if the hour your fancy has pictured should ever arrive, how gladly—how joyfully—would my disembodied spirit, casting behind this frail garb of clay, then spread forth its pinions, to accompany thine to the mansions of the blest for ever. There is beauty—there is gladness—in the thought—and I pray to the Searcher of hearts that He may ordain it to be so."

" No, no!" said Ellen, smiling, " I cannot hope for this. When I look at the brightness of your eye, undiminished for so many years—the glossy hue of your raven locks still untouched by the snows of so many winters—the undecayed vigour of your whole frame, and contrast them with those of all I see around, I

cannot but think that the allotted number of the days of the years of man will pass by and leave you even as you now are, after all those you love are for ever laid in the cold and silent grave."

I glanced at the sweet speaker, but I saw nothing to betray that she knew or suspected more than was allowed to meet the ear. If she did, certain it is that no word or look betrayed her consciousness of the fatal secret which lay corroding in my own breast, and which, least of all, would I then have disclosed to her, who would have shrunk before the knowledge of it, like a withered and blasted thing from my embrace.

"And if it should be so, Ellen," I asked, "if it should be so, who will be the sufferer? Surely, not the disembodied spirit that shall then rest in the fullness of its bliss—the brightness of its repose."

"Oh, no—no!" she replied, while a momen-

tary enthusiasm lighted up her eyes—" no—no! even if countless years should elapse ere the spirits of those we loved on earth shall join ours in yon bright and glorious heaven, these countless years can but appear to the spirits of the disembodied blest as so many passing and unmarked moments."

" Countless years"—I repeated with a sigh. " Alas, Ellen, you know not what you say. To you, the inhabitant of a world where sorrow is unknown, they may indeed pass on the wings of the morning, but what will they appear to those who are left, widowed and alone, to mourn in sackcloth and in ashes here ?"

" But as a few short days of trouble !" said Ellen, clasping my hand within her own, while she looked most calmly—sweetly—in my face, " a few short days; for even the saddest heart, throughout the length of its weary pilgrimage, will ever look forward to that termi-

nation which must again unite it, for ever, to all it loved below. This hope will cheer the fainting spirit, and support the drooping heart, and send the pilgrim, contented at least, if not rejoicing, on his way."

"It may be so, Ellen," I half unconsciously replied, "it may be so, during the short allotted span of mortal years.—But if the common laws of nature be made subservient to another, perhaps a wiser end, and their race be stretched into the infinity of time, oh! what shall speak comfort to the heart of the mourner, then?"

"Nay," she answered, fondly smiling, "that cannot be;—but were it even so, and *you* were in that situation, think you it would not avail to smooth the roughness of your path here, to know that, when time should be no more, the spirit of your own Ellen would be the first to welcome the wayfaring stranger to the rest of another and a brighter world?"

"It would, indeed," I answered, while I pressed the fond pleader to my heart, and the warm tears gushed in torrents from my eyes. "Surely it is so, and as, amidst the tempest and the storm, the prospect of a quiet and sheltered haven delights the heart of the mariner, so will the weary traveller in this world look forward with a hope that cannot change, to the rest of those mansions, where there is no more sin—no more sorrow—no more separation—and no more death. This hope will hold his fainting spirit up, and shed its bright halo over even the darkest of his hours. Toils and troubles may surround him—dangers may beset his path—but, amidst them all, his unchanging gaze will be fixed upon that beacon which leads him on his way, and, though far distant, distinctly to be seen, smiles upon him with a light that no darkness can extinguish nor tempest overthrow."

I paused—but Ellen answered not—I

pressed her to my heart, and as she returned my mute caress she looked up, and I saw that her eyes were filled with tears. We spoke not, yet we understood each other, and if in these silent hours there can be a communion of souls while no earthly words are uttered, that communion took place while our little bark glided over the silvery waters to our own quiet and peaceful home.

Many years glided past in the enjoyment of a calm and tranquil life, and, such is the force of habit upon the mind of man, and so little is he accustomed to look to futurity, that I had almost forgotten the curse entailed upon me, and, for the time, my heart was lightened of its load. At this distant period, when many passing events combine to tell that time is drawing towards its close, and I can look forward to the end of my long career, as something more immediately in view, I can think of those days with a thankful heart,

and, short as they were, wonder that such should have been bestowed upon me. Our union, it is true, was not blessed with children, because it was one part of the curse I bore about me, that I should go childless to the grave. Thus it was that the baneful, withering nature of my doom extended a portion of its blighting influence to all those more immediately connected with me; and I have often, in the quiet hours of solitude, with a self-upbraiding spirit, asked myself what right I had to link my inexorable fate with that of the virtuous and the good, and thus destroy the brightest hopes that blossom in a youthful matron's heart. But my kind Ellen never murmured, and if a wish for offspring formed itself within her breast, it never escaped her lips, or breathed itself upon the ear. She was too good—too gentle—too holy—for a world of sin like this.

The first interruption to the calm of our

domestic life, was occasioned by the death of the excellent Mr. Dinwiddie. Full of years, and leaving the odour of a good name behind him, he departed from this scene. We stood by the side of the dying man's bed, as his last hour approached. He was calm and collected, and a radiant smile played around his lips, and a light shone upon his countenance, as if the gates of heaven were already opened to his sight. It would have required little stretch of the imagination to picture myriads of bright rays, emanating from the throne of the Eternal, bursting through these opened gates, while an innumerable company of angels descended to bear a kindred spirit to its home. Calmly and composedly, but with a voice distinct and firm as it had ever been, the good old man uttered his last prayer, and in that prayer he forgot no one who was dear to him; calmly and composedly he bade each of us farewell; and calmly and

composedly he turned him round to die, and breathed his last without a struggle or a groan.

No useless burst of grief was heard to escape from the hearts of his bereaved children; they felt that he had been long spared to them; they knew that his hour was come; their confidence was placed in one who would not forsake them; and, in the full conviction that, ere long, they should again meet to part no more, they resigned him to his God.

When a dear friend is suddenly cut off in the prime and vigour of his youth, we feel as if the tie that bound us to him were rudely snapt asunder; as if the ordinary rules of nature were violated and their course departed from. We cannot reconcile ourselves to the loss, but vainly count over the number of years he *might* have seen, without these mysterious laws having been infringed upon, and the first bursts of sorrow vent themselves in a

wild and impassioned strain. It is then, perhaps, that the meek spirit of the Christian is most severely tried; but it is when the aged is resigned to God that it shines forth in all the brightness of its excelling beauty.

We kissed the lips of the dead, and departed from the chamber. Ellen rested upon my arm; and, as we turned to leave the room, looked up, and with a smile upon her lips, whispered "he was so good." She uttered no more; but these few words spoke volumes, for they told of the spirit that dwelt in the speaker's mind, and the worth of him who was gone for ever. He was, indeed, a good man. Charitable, almost to a fault, in his disposition, with an open heart and liberal hand he was ever ready to minister to the wants of all. In simplicity, like an innocent child, there was no deceit in him; and he dreamt not of deceit in others. Kindhearted and benevolent, he was the object of united

affection and esteem to all who knew him; and, when the poor lost him, they might well shed a tear over his grave, for they had lost a friend. Peace be with him! He lived not to know that he had been deceived by the accursed one he had received and cherished as a son.

CHAPTER X.

"A change came o'er the spirit of my dream."

BYRON.

"Oh, it is sad to notice, day by day,
In those we love, the slow but sure decay—
The wasting dream—the fever of the mind,
That steals along, yet leaves its mark behind.
To see the change—to watch the lovely wreck—
And, one by one, to feel each heartstring break—
Each binding cord give way—each fond tie sever—
Till love—and joy—and *hope*—are gone for ever!"

ANON.

THE death of the good old man occasioned less change than such an event generally produces in a family. Edward succeeded to his father's charge, and he trode in his father's steps. He could scarcely have placed a more

bright and excellent example before his eyes. He had now been united for some years to one who was every way worthy of him. *His* union had been blest with two lovely children, and if *mine* had been fruitless, I felt in my heart's core that I loved his offspring as if they had been my own. They often passed the day with us in our sweet cottage, and it was a new source of delight, both to Ellen and myself, to watch them in their guileless mirth, and listen to the innocent prattle of their tongues. That heart must, indeed, be hard and seared, which expands not with the fullest glow of affection towards a beautiful and engaging child. Edward's children possessed both of these qualities in an eminent degree; and the burst of sunshine their presence ever cast upon our dwelling, added new zest to the enjoyment of these passing hours of my existence. But when the cup is full it will overflow. Even in the midst of the blessings

I enjoyed, I felt that these blessings were inconsistent with my fatal doom, and I trembled for the hour when the sunny glimpse should pass away: it did pass—the change came; and now, when, with a cold and calculating heart, I look back upon the occurrences which more immediately led to that change, I feel almost inclined to adopt the doctrine of fatalism in its highest degree, and to fancy that all which must be, is marked down, as with an iron pen, the writing of which can neither be altered nor erased.

It was towards the close of a lovely evening, about the latter end of summer, when, returning from the chase, I heard the sound of voices in earnest conversation in the enclosure surrounding our cottage. I was separated from the speakers by a thick fence of clustering honeysuckles and wild roses. This concealed me from their view, and the noiseless tread of my footsteps on the green turf fell

not on their ear. I would have passed onward, had not the few words, which I accidentally overheard, instantly arrested my attention. I recognised the speaker's voice, and knew her to be the daughter of that wretched Apothecary, who had so villainously conspired against the honour of my bride—one, in every respect, worthy of her sire;—a babbler and busy body, prone to evil, and, withal, of that restless prying disposition, which brought misfortune in her train whithersoever her ill-boding presence came. I had never encouraged an intimacy with her; I *hated* her; and my gentle Ellen, although she could not *dislike*, at least bore no love towards her.

"And have you no curiosity?" she exclaimed, as if in answer to something Ellen had remarked, "have you no curiosity to know his secret?"

"None," answered Ellen, quietly, "for,

were there any thing it is fitting I should know, I am satisfied he would himself disclose it to me."

"Indeed!" said her companion, with, methought, somewhat of a sneer—"but, however, you know best; only this I shall say, that, come good, come ill, were I in your situation I should be mistress of it ere another day passed."

"Mistress of what?" asked Ellen, in her own gentle tones. "There is nothing I wish to know."

"Nothing!" echoed her companion. "But come, come!" she added, suddenly changing her tone into one of a more cajoling nature—"I dare say you know all about it, but wisely wish to keep your own counsel; and that, to be sure, I cannot but say, is prudent; yet there are exceptions, you know, to every general rule. A friend in need is a friend

indeed, and you may serve your own ends better by enabling me to contradict—to—to explain—certain rumours that are abroad."

"I know nothing to disclose,"—said Ellen, calmly—

"What!" exclaimed the other, "do you not know that he whom you call your husband is said to be——?" The speaker's voice sunk to a whisper, so that I could not hear the conclusion of her sentence. My mind was upon the rack, but it was relieved by hearing Ellen's sweet musical laugh, as she replied—"The good gossips of —— do him infinite honour; but I marvel much, that, holding such opinions, they dwell so quietly in his neighbourhood."

"But you yourself must admit," continued her persevering inquisitor, "that during the long series of years he has been amongst us, there has been no change in him, while many have sunk into the grave, and others passed from comparative youth into a ripe old age."

"I have known him longer than either you or they have," answered Ellen, while, from the tone of her voice, I could picture to my mind's eye that she smiled while she spoke—"and I have seen that he retains the beauty and vigour of his manhood, but I love him not the less for that."

"Yes!" exclaimed the other, with a sneer, "but when these ends are attained by ——" again her voice lowered, but the conclusion of the sentence fell upon my ear, and her last words were, "it behoves others to enquire into it."

The promoter of evil now appeared to be taking leave, and, that I might avoid the sight of one who was as a serpent in my path, I turned from the direction by which I knew she must pass, and sought my dwelling by another way.

During the preceding conversation I felt inclined, more than once, to burst forward and

interrupt its progress, but my feet were as if rooted to the ground, and, till its conclusion, I could not move from the spot whereon I stood. A strange, dismal foreboding of evil hung like a dark cloud upon my mind. I felt how vain it was to attempt to fly from fate. The curse followed me wherever I went; and in the agony of the moment I determined, come what would, to disclose the particulars of my wretched doom to Ellen. I saw, or at least I fancied, that suspicion must be raised within her mind, and with that mutability of temper which is the great characteristic of the human race, I now determined upon adopting the very course which I had formerly so resolutely determined to avoid. Upon Ellen's prudence I knew I could rely—on the rock of her affection I anchored with the most implicit faith—and I indulged the vain hope that, in the full knowledge of the truth, she might become a powerful auxiliary in warding off many of the

evils of my fate. The folly of my determination is yet to be seen!

"There should be no secrets," I said, "betwixt husband and wife," and I turned the projecting angle of a rock, and came in full view of the sloping lawn that lay around my dwelling. Ellen was at the farther end of it, but the moment she perceived me she darted forward, and with a beaming countenance welcomed my return. She clung to my arm, and placed her small hand in mine, and her looks were bright with confidence and love. Oh! why are these days for ever gone? Even now I remember the glad joyous looks of my beloved wife on that all gloriously splendid evening.

We passed onward—and, amidst the smiles that illuminated her open countenance, I could trace no shadow of distrust lingering upon the placid features of my Ellen, to awaken, even to the mind of suspicion, the slightest idea that

the remembrance of the conversation I had overheard remained in her thoughts. No! she was purity itself; but, nevertheless, my determination was unchanged.

"Ellen," I said, in a low tone, and paused. She looked in my face, as if waiting to hear what I had to say.

"A few minutes ago," I continued, I accidentally overheard a conversation betwixt you and that torment of our village.

A slight, transient, momentary blush passed over her features.

"Then," she answered, "you overheard a very foolish conversation, which I had already forgotten."

"Indeed! and have *you* Ellen no curiosity to gratify, in a matter in which you are so deeply concerned."

"None"—she answered quietly, "for I know that you would not conceal anything from me that ought to be revealed; and the restless

nature of my worthy visitor's character is too notorious to require any comment. "Besides," she added, after a pause, "her reports were too absurd to merit a moment's belief, even from the most superstitious."

"Ellen," I replied, in a calm distinct voice, "you are mistaken. Never reject as impossible, or even improbable, any incident, however strange, simply because to your finite views and limited faculties it appears to be so. The laws of nature are mysterious—they are wonderful; but there is a power by which they are guided, which is more wonderful—more mysterious still. By that power they may be overturned—by that power their ordinary rules may be dispensed with, and to it they bend subservient, with as much facility as the light bark, bounding before a prosperous gale, bends it to the pilot's will; or the high-trained steed to the light touch of the rider's hand."

"But there is no instance," said Ellen,

gently, "of the laws of nature being dispensed with as to the length of human days."

"Perchance there has been none in *your* day, Ellen; but you have read of many whose lives have been extended to ten times the ordinary length of those of the present day."

"But that, you know," answered Ellen, "was in the young days of the world; and man's life was then lengthened that its beautiful surface might be peopled with the race for which it was created. This end accomplished, the length of man's days gradually decreased, till sin, and the sorrow which it brings, arose to a height so fearful, that the Great Disposer of events, in his wisdom, saw fit to reduce them to a span."

"Ellen!" I solemnly exclaimed—"I have known length—a fearful length of days, given as the punishment of sin. We cannot, even for a single hour, uphold our own lives; and

think you that it is not in the power of Him by whom they are upheld, for their present short allotted space, should he see fit, to uphold them for a thousand years?—This feeble fabric, this complicated machinery, in which the living principle abides, is the work of His hands, and, at His pleasure, it may be dissolved, and melt away as snow in the sunny beams; or remain as the same snow, hardened under the influence of a never-ending frost."

"It is true," said Ellen, thoughtfully; "yet in our day there has been no instance of the life of man being so lengthened out."

"Listen to me, Ellen!" I exclaimed, as I led her into a sweet and lovely bower that hung over the blue waters of the lake, and gently drew her to my side, as we seated ourselves within the shelter of its calm retreat. The evening was still and beautiful; the lake lay in motionless silence at our feet, and the

beams of the setting sun tinged the tops of the surrounding hills with a bright and golden hue.

At that calm hour, and in that lone retreat, I whispered in her ear the long treasured secret of my heart. * * * * * *
In silent agony I watched the effect of my disclosure. Slowly—deliberately—Ellen raised herself from my arms. With a freezing calmness, she gazed upon my features.—Her own were pale as death. She pressed her hands upon her temples—she drew back the long ringlets from her brow, as if to clear away some mist that hung before her eyes and intercepted the clearness of her vision.

"You mock me," she, at length, said; but her white lips moved not, and the sound seemed to issue from the hollow of her breast.

"Ellen—Ellen!" I exclaimed—for I felt that I had gone too far to recede—the Rubicon was passed, and I could not now draw back—

"On my soul, I do not mock—can your own mind present nothing to its view to corroborate the truth of what I now state?—remember the chapel of La Scala Santa."

The beautiful image before me, that looked more like a statue of Parian marble than a human figure, pressed her hand to her forehead as if trying to recall the memory of past days—to unite the links of a broken and confused chain of thought.

"Is it even so," she, at length, said; "then my young hopes are blasted, and happiness has departed from my home.—Blessed be God that I have borne no child to inherit its father's curse, or perpetuate the remembrance of his crime."

She arose, pale—but steady—and walked slowly towards our dwelling. I followed—and, as usual, would have placed her arm within my own, but she silently motioned me from her, and, without my aid, entered the

home which, from that hour, appeared to me to assume a cheerless and deserted aspect.

I retired to my own apartment, and I raised my hands on high and cursed my fate.—Again I had fearful experience of its severity. If, for a few passing suns, I could enjoy the shadow of happiness or prosperity, it was sure to vanish; almost, indeed, before the certainty, that it had ever been, could be implanted in the mind. *Now,* all had been discovered.—Ellen knew the unhappy one to whom her fate was linked for ever; and what could she do but look upon him with fear and trembling. Could one so pure be linked to, and daily associate, with sin and guilt?—No—no! every principle of her heart, every feeling of her mind would revolt against so unnatural an union; and, with deep loathing and abhorrence only, could she now gaze upon him who had deceived her thus.

"Yes—yes"—I cried aloud, "it is in this the

extremity of the curse consists.—Its fatal, blighting influence extends to all those who are near and dear to me. Go where I will, its withering aspect follows me. The good—the loved—the gentle–fall beneath it; and death, even death and ruin, to all save to him who brings them both, stalk onward in its train."

I passed a sleepless night; and, early in the morning, I arose with hell contending in my heart, and the feelings of the damned preying upon my mind; I rushed forth from the dwelling of so many calm and happy days, and wandered by the banks of the lake till the sun stood high in the blue and cloudless heavens. The beautiful aspect of the day seemed to mock me; for it was not in unison with my present thoughts and feelings, and I even felt as if I could have exulted in the howlings of the storm, and, with a fearless satisfaction, exposed my defenceless breast to

the fury of the wildest and most desolating blast.

I returned home towards evening—weak, dispirited, and exhausted—but there was no one to welcome me with smiles; no one, with a cheerful and happy countenance, to greet me as I entered. The change struck a chill upon my heart; I looked around, but it seemed as if loneliness and desolation had taken up their dwelling there, and smiled upon and mocked me. I would have given worlds to have been welcomed even with a *curse*—had that curse been uttered by ——— No—not by Ellen; *she* could have cursed no one—but by the voice of a human being.

I saw not Ellen during the whole of that day; but, next morning, when, after another sleepless night, pale and haggard, I entered the little apartment where we had been wont to meet at breakfast, I found her there before me. I know not that I ever experienced a

more trying moment. I paused—I staggered—I would have retreated, but my feet were rooted to the ground. "Thus," a voice seemed to whisper in my ear—"thus conscious guilt ever stands in the presence of the innocent and pure."

I made an effort to speak—the words died upon my lips; but Ellen came forward, and took my hand as she had been wont to do, and spoke to me in her own gentle, soothing tones, and led me to the breakfast-table, and placed herself by my side; and to one who saw us as we had been, and who saw us as we now were, no visible change *could* have been perceptible.—*I* saw with other eyes; and the calm, resigned aspect that shone in Ellen's looks, even while her pale face betrayed the mental struggle she had undergone, at once and plainly told that *duty*,—not affection—not inclination—not love—not the spontaneous feeling of her own heart—no—no! none of

these, but cold, freezing duty—now guided the tenor of her conduct. The thought struck a pang to my heart, but *I* had no right to complain, and there I treasured it in the depths of its most innermost recess. Thus, for the first time in our lives, had each thoughts and feelings, wrapt in mystery and gloom, to conceal from the other. *Me*, Ellen did not deceive; but I knew that it would bring a pang to her own heart, if I allowed her, even for a moment, to fancy that she had planted a festering thorn in mine.—I sought, therefore, to lead her into the belief that I was deceived, and in this, I think, I did succeed. There was, however, a wide gulph placed between us; our hearts were torn asunder; the golden chain of confidence was severed, and no power could ever again unite its broken links.

It were a vain attempt, day by day, to labour through the history of a few short weeks at this period of my life. It is sufficient—more

than sufficient—to say, that the sorrow I had planted in Ellen's heart was too deep-seated to be rooted out. The constant struggle she maintained to appear calm—nay, kind and affectionate in my sight—to soothe me—to draw me from myself—at last undermined a constitution which never had been of a strong or robust nature. The pale, but deadly foe, who, in earlier days, had assailed her, again approached with his insinuating tread; and, with a changeless aspect, but an aching heart, I was compelled, day by day, to witness my heart's treasure unconsciously stealing towards the grave.—Oh! there is no sorrow like unto this.—To be forced, every hour, and every moment of the day, to watch the slow but sure inroads of disease—the gradual wasting of the frame—the decay of nature, in those we love and cherish in our heart's core, and to know that we can afford them no aid—that no effort of ours can obstruct the fell destroyer's ap-

proach;—oh! it is dreadful—it is fearful—and the heart that feels it not must, indeed, be made of stone.

Many an unseen tear was shed by those who loved her, and they were not few, on Ellen's account, while she herself seemed to be totally unconscious of the power to which she was about to fall a prey.

At length, some one spoke of the South—the calm, deceitful South;—and it was arranged that she who was the sole object of my love upon earth, should be removed from her own fair land to the sunny regions of a warmer clime. To me, it appeared evident that her heart was breaking; yet, meekly and willingly—even while she could have no hope that any returning spring would again light her to the land of her sires—did this excellent being acquiesce in every arrangement that had been made.—Many a bitter tear mingled with the parting embraces bestowed upon us by our

dear friends. The delusive, fondly-cherished hope that, ere long, we should again return, sustained them in the trying hour. Alas! with what an abiding grasp does this hope cling around the heart till the cold realities of truth come to sever it for ever.—"God bless you!" were the last words we heard.—They came from Edward's lips, in broken—stifled sounds, and we parted—never to meet again!



CHAPTER XI.

"Ask me no more; but let the silent years
Be closed and seared over their memory,
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie."
SHELLEY.

The vital principle that animates the worn and feeble frame, like the last glimmering of an expiring lamp, demands the utmost caution to preserve it from being prematurely extinguished. Our journey, therefore, was necessarily slow, and nearly a month had elapsed from the day of our departure, ere we reached the city of L——, on the shores of the ——— sea. Here we proposed to remain

for some time, to allow my poor invalid to recruit her exhausted strength. She was pleased with the beauty and sweetness of the place, and my heart was glad within me, when I saw that these were capable of awakening an interest in her breast. It was, indeed, both a beautiful and a splendid city. Its warehouses and shops were like palaces, and they shone with all the magnificence that gold and silver could bestow. Its towers and fanes rose on high, till they mingled with the clouds; its temples, built in beauty, stood upon the earth like so many gigantic things, frowning on the proud beings who swarmed in the crowded streets below. Alas! who that gazed upon all their gorgeous magnificence could have dreamt that so sad a change was soon destined to befall it!

We passed many days in L——, and methought I saw a reviving bloom upon Ellen's cheek. She appeared to take something of

the interest of former days, in the great works of art around her. Her pencil was again employed, and that her mind might not want occupation, I made it my care to place in her study the most beautiful drawings that could be procured. She felt my attention, and thanked me for it with a look that I fondly imagined was like one of those she used in happier days to bestow upon me. In this I was mistaken. It was the calm look of a contented heart, that had little more to do with the things of time.

Soon, however, in appearance at least, she was so much better, that the day of our departure was at length fixed. But vain are the thoughts and plans of man. Ere that day arrived, a foul pestilence broke out in the city, and with its ravages swept thousands to the grave. The house of joy became the dwelling of the sad—the voice of mirth no longer echoed in the streets—and man looked

upon his fellow-man with coldness and distrust. I would have fled, but the gates of the city were closed, guards were placed around them, and no egress from its doomed and destined precincts was allowed.

It will readily be believed, that my mind was ill at ease in this situation. A thousand times did I blame myself for lingering in so dangerous a place—a thousand times did I curse my folly in delaying our departure. For myself, indeed, I cared not—but I felt for the suffering angel, who had done so much for me; and who, even in the midst of these scenes of desolation and distress, spoke the words of comfort to my soul.

For many long days we never left our home; but the house we inhabited was built upon the city wall, and the windows of our apartments commanded the view of a beauteous tract of land, over which the rich perfumes of the south were borne upon the air.

This alone, I believe, supported Ellen's declining health. The confinement, however, to which she was necessarily subjected, visibly impaired her strength; yet her life was too precious to me to risk it by allowing her to go forth, even for an hour.

Thus week after week passed away. Our doors were barricadoed, and we held no communication with a human being; not even with the solitary domestic of our own establishment. At length, the provisions I had stored were consumed, and it then became necessary that I should go forth in search of more. The attempt was attended with more danger than I had dreamt of. Cautiously I opened the outer door of the suite of apartments Ellen and I had appropriated to our own use. I stole down the stairs, as if fearing that the echo of my own footsteps would sound upon my ear. There was a still, breathless silence in the house, and it seemed so like the silence of the

grave, that I dreaded to disturb it. It was long before I could summon up courage to call aloud. When I did so, no one answered me —no voice but my own was heard. I directed my steps to the apartment of our servant;—the door of the room was open, and I saw, at a glance, that the plague had entered our dwelling, for the poor creature lay upon her bed a pale and livid corpse. One hand was stretched forth, as if, in the agonies of death, she had sought to reach a small jug that lay *overturned* beside her bed. Her eyes were wide open, but sunk and hollow, and methought they glared fearfully upon me. With a hurried hand I threw a covering over the body, and then turned away with sickening horror from the sight, and locked, and double-locked, the door, and the next, and next again, and threw the last key into the deep ditch that surrounded the city walls.

It was many hours ere I could venture into

Ellen's presence, and, before I did so, I took the precaution to change every article of my dress. I had found a small quantity of food, but I feared to touch it. We had enough, however, to serve for the remainder of that day, and on the morrow I determined to sally forth into the city at all hazards, that a further supply might be secured. That morrow came, and Ellen accompanied me to the door, and locked and bolted it behind me, that no one might enter till my return. There was little need of such precaution. I passed through street after street; all was fearfully still and desolate. The shops and warehouses were open, and their rich wares lay temptingly exposed to view ; but those who had traded in them were gone, or lay amongst their riches, blotched and bloated carcases. The voice of mirth had ceased—no one rejoiced now, and the worm alone was reveller here.

Ere long, however, I came to another

quarter of the town, where the hand of desolation had not done its work so well; yet, even there, the temples were filled with the dying and the dead—and the fountains in the public streets were surrounded by those who had dragged their putrid limbs towards them, that they might quench the raging thirst that consumed their very vitals.

Now and then a solitary being wandered, like a spectre, to and fro; but if, perchance, one came nigh, I rolled my garments around me, and passed him without salutation or speech. He, too, in like manner avoided me, for every one looked with suspicion upon his neighbour—and fear and terror were written in legible characters on the countenances of all.

Yet—in the very heart of this desolation—the hand of rapine and of murder was at work. I saw those who set disease and danger at defiance, that they might enrich themselves

with the spoils of the dead and dying. They stretched forth their hands to seize upon their neighbour's wealth, even at a time when they knew not if they themselves would survive another hour to enjoy it.

"What," I asked myself, as I passed along, "what has brought so dread a curse upon this fair place?" Alas! I knew not that the vial of the Almighty's wrath, destined to be poured upon it, was as yet but half exhausted. I knew not what a few short hours were to bring forth, nor how complete the ruin and destruction of the pride and boast of an empire was to be.

Having secured a small supply of food, I sought with a heavy heart to retrace my steps to my own dwelling. I saw that the desolating hand of vengeance was upon the city, and the gaunt form of pestilence strode abroad, scattering death and horror in its progress.

My way lay through that part of the city,

where the dwellings of the noble and the wealthy reared their proud heads. I gazed upon the splendid massy structures, and listened for the voice of feasting and joy I had been wont in former days to hear echoing in their halls. All was still and silent now, and the desolated mansions, with their rich adornments, seemed to stand there as so many monuments of their owners' fate. It was a striking and a melancholy sight. There is something peculiarly awful in the silence of a city. We are accustomed to hear the busy hum of voices in the streets, and to behold the crowded mart; and when no tone falls upon the ear, and no form meets the wandering eye, we cannot divest the mind of the dread impression that some fearful visitation has been, or is about to be, there.

As I proceeded on my way I passed by a fair edifice, that I knew had belonged to one of the wealthiest nobles of the place. I heard

the voice of sorrow—and a feeble cry—issue from it; for, in the silence that reigned around, the weak voice of an infant would have sounded on the ear. I paused;—the cry was repeated, and I hesitated not to enter the open portal, in the hope that I might yet be enabled to save a fellow-creature's life. The entrance hall was strewed with the bodies of the dead; I rushed past these and ascended a broad flight of marble steps. I entered a magnificent apartment, but I paused not to gaze upon its splendour, for I saw two youthful beings lying there, clasped in each other's arms. I approached them hurriedly,—they were both dead, and the long fair hair of the girl mingled with the dark locks of the youth, and one stray curl rested upon his sun-burnt cheek. He looked like one who had been to other climes, and perchance had but returned there to die with her he loved. Even in death they seemed as if they could not part, and

those fond hearts, that had loved so dearly in life, now lay side by side, after they had ceased to beat. While I gazed upon them, I beheld a slight tremulous motion, and I fancied for a moment that one or the other lived. It was a passing breath of wind that had stirred the fair ringlets of the girl's hair;—they were blown aside for an instant—they wavered in the breeze, but returned to mingle more closely with the clustering curls of the youth. One ringlet, however, remained unmoved. It was that which lay on his dark cheek, and to me it seemed as if it were loth to quit so dear a resting-place.

I turned to leave these two, but another faint cry, and the tread of a heavy foot, struck upon my ear. I followed the sound, and passed the door of an inner chamber, whose adornments appeared of a richer kind even than those of that I had just quitted. At the further end stood a canopied bed composed of the most

costly materials, and on that bed lay the form of a lovely being in the very prime of youth. She was the living image of the dead girl I had left behind, and her flushed cheek and bright eyes told that she would not be long separated from the sister of her love.

" Ayxa," she murmured, as if addressing one whose ear could no longer listen to her soft voice—" Ayxa—water—oh! bring me water."

I looked around the room. A table near her bed was covered with costly diamonds and rich jewels, but there was not a drop of that precious liquid for which, at that moment, the fair sufferer would gladly have exchanged them all. I rushed from the room, and soon found a small vase of water, with which I rapidly returned. Short, however, as my absence had been, I found another there before me. I beheld a dark-browed villain steal across the room, and approach the table where the costly jewels lay. He stretched forth his hand and

seized them in his grasp. A faint cry of terror passed the dying girl's lips. The plunderer of the dead started like a guilty thing, and cast an alarmed and hurried glance around. A grim smile passed over his countenance, when he saw the object of his fear;—boldly, deliberately, he drew a poniard from his vest, and approached her bed. Another low moan escaped the sufferer's lips—she looked at him with beseeching eyes—but she had no strength left to ward off the intended blow. He raised his hand, and the glittering poniard flashed upon my sight. I cast the vase of water to the ground, darted forward, and caught the ruffian with a powerful grasp. It was less than the work of a moment to wrest his weapon from him, and bury it deep in his own polluted heart. He fell without a groan; I spurned him from me with my foot, and turned round to aid the suffering object of his wrath; but she too was dead; the last struggle was over,

and her pure spirit was wafted to its Creator's throne, even while that of the murderer bent before it to receive its final doom.

"Merciful Father"—I exclaimed—"how much of death am I doomed to witness here?" A heavy sickness fell upon me—an oppression I could not account for weighed upon my heart. I thought the pestilence had seized me, and although Death stared me not in the face, a long train of suffering rose in dread array before me. I sought to gain the open air, but first I drew the silken cover of her bed over the face of her who lay upon it.

Suddenly, while engaged in this occupation, although the day had been pure and bright, and scarcely a breath of air stirred, a dark cloud, like night, hung betwixt me and the sun. In an instant after, I heard the sound as of a thousand chariots driven fiercely to and fro—then a low rumbling noise like that of distant thunder; and again all was fearfully

quiet and still. I had not, however, time to look around me, when a wild and bursting crash succeeded—the solid earth reeled like a drunkard to and fro—a wide chasm yawned before me—the sea rose in mountains, yet retreated from the shore—hills and vales were rent asunder—towers, houses, temples nodded—tottered—fell,—and the last sensation I experienced was the ground moving from beneath my feet, while I sank into utter darkness and dismay amidst the ruins of a proud and powerful city.

CHAPTER XI.

'Oh ! for a word more of that gentle voice."
BYRON'S CAIN.

' Dead—with the last expiring ray that sun had shed."
ANON.

In the breathless rapid descent I had made, I lost all recollection, and must have remained in a state of insensibility for many hours. On recovering, I found myself stretched upon the damp ground, without a single glimmering of light to exhibit the situation or extent of the living tomb in which I lay immured. I attempted to rise; but I was stiff from the bruises I had received, and could accomplish

no more than to crawl, like a reptile, along the ground. Onward I moved, over piles of stones and rubbish, till I reached a solid wall. I groped and crawled cautiously along till I came to one running in right angles from it.—From that I turned, and again groped across the horrors of my dungeon, till I reached another wall—then a fourth—and then,—shattered as these walls were—piled and heaped with ruins, the horrible conviction came over me that all hope of egress from my tomb was vain.

I raised my bruised body, and sat, the image of despair, upon a stone. I uttered no cry, for in my heart I felt convinced that there could be no *living* being within miles of me.—I—I alone—the accursed—the doomed—lived and moved in all that wide domain. Ruin and desolation had come and swept myriads to the grave, yet, in the midst of that ruin and desolation, *I* was spared.—Oh! how enviable was

their fate compared with mine. *They* slept in peace—*they* were spared a knowledge of the horrors by which they were surrounded—death had come a welcome visitor to them.—*I* lived—*I* moved—but, God of heaven and earth! in what a situation did I live and move, and how welcome would that death, which fled at *my* approach, have been to *me!*

The remembrance of Ellen came upon my mind, but it scarcely awakened a single feeling in my heart. I could not go to her—and if I could have gone, I felt how unavailing my errand must have been. She could not return to me, for that dread convulsion which, in the short space of a few minutes, had overturned empires, and changed the whole face of nature, scarcely could have spared her. A still, small voice within told me that she was at rest, and hope itself lay dead and buried in my heart.

The past rose in quick succession to my view—the fatal past—and peopled that dark

dungeon with a thousand forms. My gentle Zehlima—my home amidst the wilds of the Indian forest;—my dearest Ellen—my cottage by the borders of the calm lake, deep in the bosom of the mountains of the north—Edward—Mary—friend after friend—and the ruin I had brought upon them all! The voice of woe sounded in my ear, for I had rifled a fair plant from its native soil, and brought it to perish in a foreign land.—Oh! what had I to do with woman or with woman's love—with the guiltless and the good? A withering blight had ever followed, with quick and rapid strides, upon the summer of my love; and, inwardly, I vowed, and that vow was registered on high, that if my accursed fate should once more lead me to the haunts of man, I would pass through life, the solitary—the doomed—the destined being that I was—nor again seek to thwart the decrees of the Most High by a sinful opposition to his unchanging

will; nor again sully the purity of woman's heart with my corroding and polluted love.

Was the calmness that now fell upon me that of resignation or despair? I know not—but I laid me down upon the cold and damp floor of my dungeon, utterly careless of what should next befall. I sunk into a restless and disturbed slumber, from which I awoke with the pains of hunger gnawing at my vitals. I had no food—no water—and I was compelled to endure the torments of hunger and thirst without the slightest prospect of relief. Both, at length, passed away. Hunger fed itself; and the dampness of the floor on which I lay, piercing through my bones and marrow, tended to assuage my thirst.

Soon, however, like a repulsed but not vanquished foe, both returned with redoubled violence to the charge, and I actually screamed in the agony I endured. My screams were answered by the distant howling of the wolf, and the fierce yell of the hyena, and I knew

that beasts of prey were prowling in the ruins of the city above my head. But from their attacks I was safe enough. They could not reach me in my living tomb—yet, for so will nature ever work, at the sound of *their* screams, *mine* ceased—and I became as mute as if I had, indeed, been the legitimate property of the grave.

But this could not last. The stillness of the moment passed away, and, with a maniac's fury, I tore the sandals from my feet, and tried to devour the dry materials of which they were composed. I gnawed my fingers and my arms till the blood sprung from the lacerated wounds;—it was *my own*, and I drank it greedily; and, satisfied with my horrible repast, soon fell into a deep and calm repose.

I know not how long I remained in this state: when I did awake, the tenfold tortures of the damned were preying upon my vitals. Burning—searing irons rested on my

heart—my swoln tongue clove to the roof of my mouth—and my staring eye-balls beheld thousands of glaring lights passing to and fro in the darkness of my dungeon. I started up and rushed with agony across its narrow space. My foot struck against something of a soft and yielding nature. I stooped down—it was the mangled remains of a human being.—My first cry was one of joy; but I knew that madness itself would speedily follow the indulging in such a repast, and I turned away, and, in very despair, cast myself upon the earth, and dug and tore it with my nails.—Water!—water collected in the hollow I had made.—I stooped down—I thrust my head into it, and, filthy and polluted as it was, drained it to the dregs.

I arose—refreshed and cooled—and with the fever in my veins abated. But when my thirst was thus quenched, hunger returned in a doubly insupportable degree. I had food

enough now, however, and why should I hesitate? With a desperate calmness, which I still shudder to think of, I approached the putrid corpse. I seated myself, like a churchyard Ghoul, close by the mangled, festering remains—and, with my hands, tore delicate pieces from the once fair and faultless limbs. These I devoured, and quenched my thirst with the waters of my own muddy well. I even revelled in my horrible repast—and it seemed to me as if I had feasted like a king.

Many days passed, and, with feelings of renewed horror, I saw that my store of provisions was drawing to an end. *I* could not terminate my own existence, and thus flee from the tortures that now stood in horrible array before me. Death — the refuge of the unhappy—was denied to me. I could not die—I *must* live—and, living, feel all the torments of the guilty dead. Despair sat enthroned

upon my heart—a dark, gloomy, terrible despair. But the eye of an offended Being was upon me.—Suddenly, a low rumbling sound attracted my attention. It was similar to that which I had formerly heard, and, in like manner, was followed by a reeling of the earth, and the tumbling crash and rolling of a whole mass of stones. I pressed my hands upon my eyes, expecting every moment to be crushed beneath the impending ruin. In a few seconds, all was still. I then ventured to remove my hands, and look around.—A distant, glimmering light attracted my attention. I arose, and, with as rapid steps as the nature of the obstacles I had to pass over would allow, approached it. It increased in magnitude, and became every moment more distinct and clear. I reached it—it was the light of day shining through a small chink—I felt the free air of heaven play upon my brow—I tore at the stones and rubbish with

my hands—I spurned them from me with my feet—and, in a few moments, with a wild shout of joy, bounded from the ruins of a dungeon into the midst of the ruins of a city—but over these the free canopy of heaven hung.

The scene was, indeed, one of a fearfully desolated aspect. The whole wide extent of that once fair city lay, levelled with the dust, in one undistinguished mass and heap of ruin and confusion.—No human being, save myself, moved or breathed within its circuit. Beasts of prey stalked to and fro, and fed upon the dead. They turned not at my approach—they fled not as I stumbled over the mass of ruins in my way—they ceased not their occupation as I passed; they gazed and growled, and suffered me to go on as if I, too, had been one of them.

There is something peculiarly awful in the silence that, even in the broad glare of day, hangs over a ruined and deserted town. We

see the crushed and broken monuments of the labour and ingenuity of man scattered far and wide around—but, alas! where are the hands that reared these proud monuments to the sky?—All gone—all dead—all buried beneath the crumbling masses their own industry had raised.

I could not bear the horrid stillness of the scene. I had recently been accustomed to the society of man, and the thought that I now stood so fearfully alone, fell like an icy bolt upon my heart. I turned my slow, despairing steps towards the place where my own dwelling once stood. No trace of it remained—not even enough to mark the spot—and, if desolation had been busy elsewhere, it had done its work here with a ready and a willing hand.

I now stood, like the last of my race, *alone*—with beasts of prey for my companions.—*They* prowled around me, while the vulture

and the eagle flapped their wings heavily above, and screamed aloud, as if impatient for the hour when I should be added to their already plentiful repast. I tried to scare them with my shouts, but they seemed to look upon the wide domain as all their own, and came close to me, and, with their keen eyes, peered into my very face. I turned from them;—they followed me, till I came to the last stone of the city, and then, as if their own territory of the dead had been freed from the presence of one who should not have been there, they left me. I looked around in the vain hope of finding some one who might reply to the questions that my heart longed to ask, yet dreaded to hear answered. A human figure, seated close by the shores of the now calm and placid sea,, caught my sight. I darted towards him—I asked him of Ellen's fate.—He looked up with a wondering, vacant stare — laughed — mocked — jabbered — and

pointed to the ruined city. I could get no other answer from him, and when I approached to touch him, he arose, with terror in his looks, and fled. Was this poor idiot, then, the only remaining inhabitant of the place? I girded my loins in haste, and followed him to the mountains. But his speed far outstripped mine, enfeebled and emaciated as I was, and I soon lost sight of the unfortunate altogether.

I had no home now—and, with a melancholy heart, I proceeded on my way. I walked on, scarcely conscious of what I did, until I had gone far into one of those rocky passes with which the mountains of the South abound.

I paused, to gaze for one moment upon the setting sun. A dim curl of smoke rose against the sky—a distant cottage caught my view. Marble palaces had been dashed in ruins to the earth, but *its* mud-built walls remained.

It was the habitation of a human being, and I proceeded towards it. Ere long I reached its precincts; I stood within the little enclosure which surrounded it, but no one came forth to welcome me, no voice sounded from within. I raised the latch and entered. A solitary female figure stood before me. She uttered a cry of terror at my approach—she gazed upon me as one she had never seen before; but *I*—*I* could not be mistaken—I rushed towards her with the little strength I had left, and sunk, in a state of insensibility, at my own Ellen's feet!

A cold damp hand, pressed upon my brow, recalled me to my senses. I opened my eyes, and I saw Ellen bending over me, with a look of the fondest solicitude depicted upon her countenance. I scarcely could believe my sight. It was no illusion, however; it was indeed Ellen, and her own gentle voice assured me of the fact.

For many days I lay stretched upon the bed of sickness and of pain. During this period I learned the particulars of Ellen's miraculous escape from death. Alarmed at my long protracted absence, she had ventured to open the door of our mansion, and look forth for my return. The softness—the sweetness of the air, to one who had so long been a prisoner, tempted her to stray a few steps forward. She reached the city gate that stood close by our dwelling, and finding it open, ventured, although with trembling steps, to pass it. She had gone but a very short distance, when suddenly the sun became obscured—the earth trembled—and on turning to retrace her steps, she beheld, in less than a moment's time, one portion of the city disappear altogether from her view, and the remainder overthrown in a crumbling mass of ruin and confusion. Winged by terror, she fled with fearful rapidity from the

sight; the trembling of the earth increased —she could no longer stand—and, at last, was stretched, insensible, upon the ground. When she recovered, she found herself still on the same spot. The earthquake had passed away, but, with it, the city also had disappeared, or lay in irretrievable ruin.— Fearing a recurrence of the shock, Ellen had exerted her little remaining strength and fled for shelter to the mountains.—Even as I had done, so had she discovered the cottage in which I found her. A few dying embers told that it had been inhabited at no distant period; but, since the day on which Ellen reached it, no owner had appeared. It is probable that business or pleasure had called him to the city, never to return again.

Thus was my gentle Ellen, one amidst thousands, miraculously preserved. Day after day, urged by what she conceived to be an

imperative duty, she returned to the ruins in search of one altogether unworthy of so inestimable a treasure. At length, hope died within her heart, and scared by the beasts of prey that had collected in the midst of the place, she desisted from her daily pilgrimages.

No human being had hitherto approached her dwelling—and thus, solitary and lonely, she had remained, patiently awaiting the occurrence of some event that might restore her to her friends, or, if it should please her God, the arrival of that hour, which she felt could not be far distant, when earthly friends could no more avail.

Such was the short and simple narrative of one whose voice was music, and whose words were truth. Under her fostering care I soon regained my wonted health and strength. —She moved about like the guardian angel of our calm retreat. But in the visions of

the night the past sometimes rose to view; and in my waking hours its abominations stood before me. At such times a restless, yet depressing spirit, preyed upon my heart, and not even Ellen's presence could dispel the gloom that hung around it. She tried every gentle means to win me from myself; calm, quiet, and resigned in her own deportment, her spotless life should then have read a practical and daily lesson unto mine; but * * * * * *

My task is nearly done; the end of my journey is in view; and the shadows of the past, which have been dragged from the silence of many years, and conjured up before me, are flitting fast away. * * *

Days and weeks passed on in the same unvaried beauty. Our life was like the flow-

ing of a calm stream. Once more Ellen and I were united as we had been in long vanished days. We lived, each for the other only—for solitude had renewed and strengthened every tie that had bound us both in one. I saw the bloom brighten upon Ellen's cheek, and gladness sparkle in her eye.—The long vista of the future shone with the joy of a calm and peaceful sunshine in my sight.—No cloud appeared to mar its beauty, or darken the brightness of the scene; and, despite the experience of many years, I yielded to the glad delusion of the moment, and my heart and soul were filled with the prospect of many happy days.

I dreamt not that in this beauteous guise the fell destroyer approached. Fancy would as soon have depicted the cold and chilling frosts of winter stealing along, robed in the smiling flowers of a warm and blooming spring. Yet, so it was.

One calm, still evening, towards the close of summer, we had returned from a short excursion in the neighbouring mountains. The sun had not yet set, and that we might enjoy the beauty of his last and lingering rays, as they shone upon the wildness of that solitary spot, Ellen reclined for a few minutes upon the soft turf beneath our favourite tree.

"Does not this remind you," she whispered, "of the evening when we first met?"

She turned towards me. I had never seen her look more beautiful. There was a smile upon her lips—a calm but fond expression in her eyes. It seemed as if she had read my heart; the same thought was passing there, and I could only answer by a soft pressure of the hand I held within my own. At that moment, a sudden change appeared. I gazed in Ellen's face—the bloom was still upon her cheek—the smile upon her lips—the calm expression in her eyes;—but the

pure spirit that enlivened them was gone for ever.—She was dead!

The whole of that long night, while the pale moon shone upon the living and the dead, I sat with Ellen's hand clasped within my own, and her cold cheek resting on my breast. In the grey twilight of the morning I dug a narrow grave, and laid her in it, and covered it over with the green turf on which, a few short hours before, she had reclined, a living and a breathing being. I heaped stones above it; and, when my work was done, I gazed upon it with tearless eyes, and I cast myself beside the grave, and the sun rose and smiled—but there was no human eye there to behold me, and I felt that in the wide circuit of the world no one breathed or moved

who could take an interest in the wanderer's fate.

I AM STILL HERE;—and it may be that he who casts his eye upon these pages shall yet meet me amidst the riot of a busy life. Let no one, however, vainly imagine he can ever find me out; if he does so, he will assuredly be mistaken. I bear no distinguishing mark about me; and the most cunningly-devised question will obtain no answer whereby suspicion may be confirmed. With the Patriarch I may cry aloud, "Wherefore is light given unto him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasure." There are others, many others, in this world, who will utter the same cry; and when the vain, and proud, and wealthy hear it, it will be their wisdom to let


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